■ Lifestyle / D1
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Citigroup not impressed with fiscal reforms

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Quick response foils bank rob; 3 suspects die

■ Entertainment / A2-1
Pinoy pirates aboard in new Bill Murray film

Tanong ng Bayan / A16
Buwis sa yosi at alak, dapat bang taasan?

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Human rights champion William Chua dies; 49

By Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

WILLIAM Chua, human rights lawyer and anti-martial law activist, counsel for frightened and little-known humble folk as well as for cases of national concern, died Monday night after a six-month bout with pancreatic cancer. He was 49.

HUMAN/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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website: www.inq7.net

No break, no solicitation, no Christmas party for cops

By Christian V. Esguerra

NO VACATION, no solicitation and no Christmas party. Anyone would think these directives had come from Ebenezer Scrooge.

NO BREAK/ A6

RP united in mourning

The lowly, mighty hail man who'd be president

HE WAS not even a martyr for democracy but the outpouring of grief from across the land over the death of Fernando Poe Jr. came like a river.

By some accounts, not since opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino was murdered on the Manila airport tarmac upon his return from exile in August 1983 to challenge a dictator has there been such a massive expression of popular grief as that which came in the wake of FPJ's death from a stroke early yesterday.

And he was just a movie actor, a high school dropout, a political novice who failed in his bid for the presidency, though he nearly unseated the incumbent.

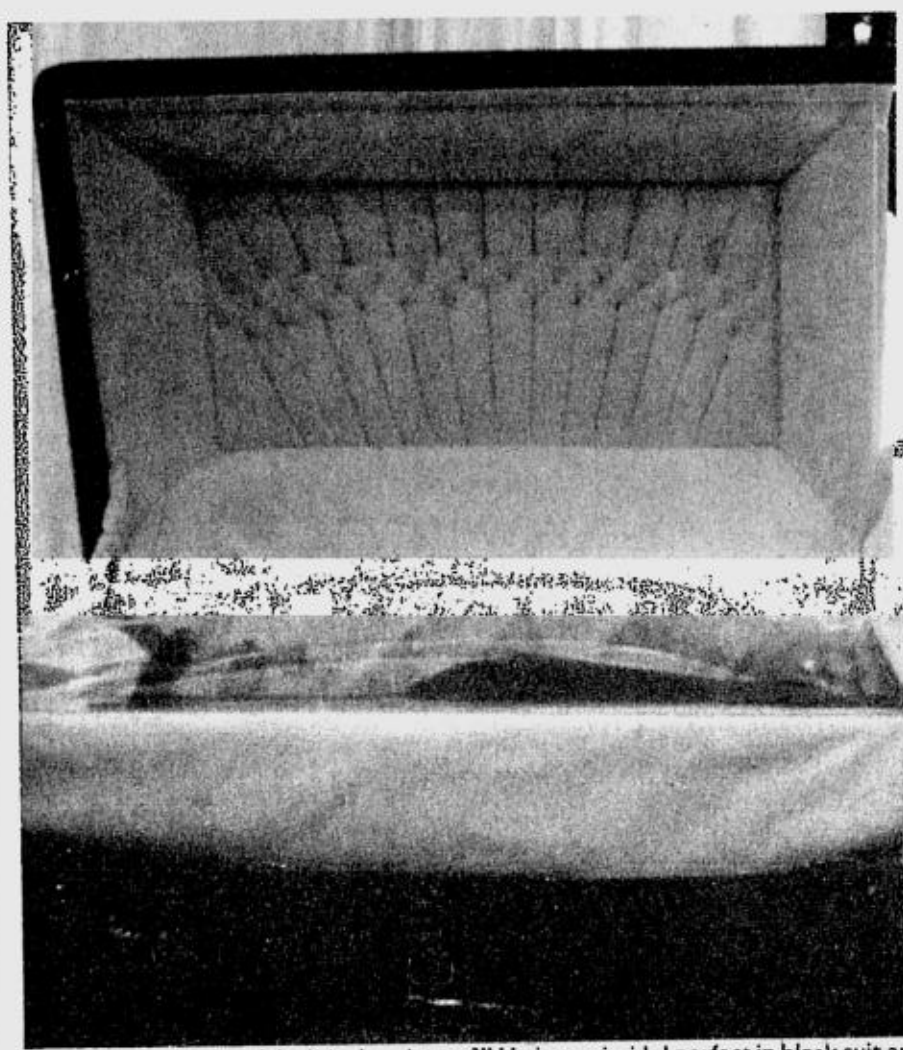
In Poe's hometown of San Carlos City in Pangasinan, residents began tying black ribbons around trees and lampposts. In a Manila suburb, a small restaurant owner closed her eatery so she could go to the chapel where the actor's remains were to be brought for viewing.

Up north, Cordillera leaders will butcher pigs today to ask Poe's spirit to protect them from bad luck.

In Dasmariñas, Cavite, a mother of three, Mercy Ramallosa, stayed up all night listening to news on the radio about the death of Poe.

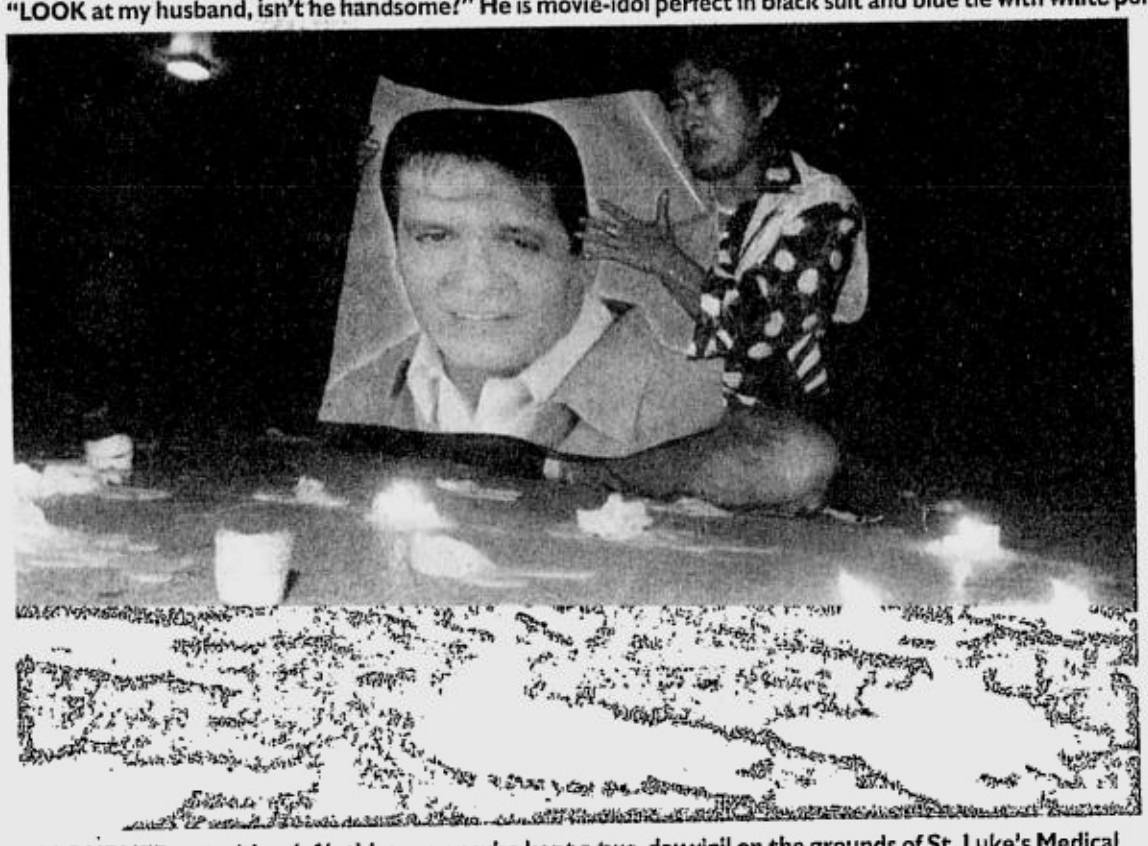
"I did not notice that there

RP MOURNS/ A22



"LOOK at my husband, isn't he handsome?" He is movie-idol perfect in black suit and blue tie with white polka dots.

THE AMAZING Susan Roces was a calming presence as she stayed composed while her husband lay dying, said witnesses inside the hospital's ICU. But she couldn't help the tears and the incredible sadness. REM ZAMORA



ALL BURNED out with grief is this woman who kept a two-day vigil on the grounds of St. Luke's Medical Center on learning her idol was gone. JOAN BONDOC

RUSHING to be at her father's bedside, Mary Grace Poe-Llamanzares arrives at the airport at 11:30 p.m. Monday from Los Angeles with her 6-month-old daughter. The doctors said that FPJ died at 12:01. ROGER MARQUEZ

Susan tells fans: You are all part of our lives

By Ruth L. Navarra

"I REMEMBER what Ronnie once told me," Susan Roces told a press conference at the Arlington East funeral parlor in San Miguel, Pasig City, referring to her husband by his nickname. "He said, 'In the most significant moments of our lives, you are a part.' I can't hold back my tears looking at all these microphones now."

Tearful but composed, the actress widow of Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday acknowledged that "Ang Panday," the blacksmith beloved of all Fernando Poe Jr. fans, was gone.

"Wala na po si Panday," she said.

She said her family was filled with mixed emotions—sad because her husband was gone, but thankful for the outpouring of support and love.

The actress said it was not too long ago when Poe, beside her, had announced his intention to seek the presidency.

"I also remember when we were married and all of you were there with us. You have been part

SUSAN/ A21

GMA wreath torched by Poe diehards

By Fe Zamora, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Juliet Labog-Javellana

THEY not only did not want to see her at the wake of their idol Fernando Poe Jr., they also ripped apart the funeral wreath she had sent for him.

Angry supporters of the late movie idol stomped on the wreath of white blossoms that President Macapagal-Arroyo had sent to Sto. Domingo Church where Poe's remains were to be brought later last night. They also set on fire the ribbon bearing her name and whatever was left of

GMA/ A21

ONE-MAN INDUSTRY

'Ang Alamat' now a true indisputable legend

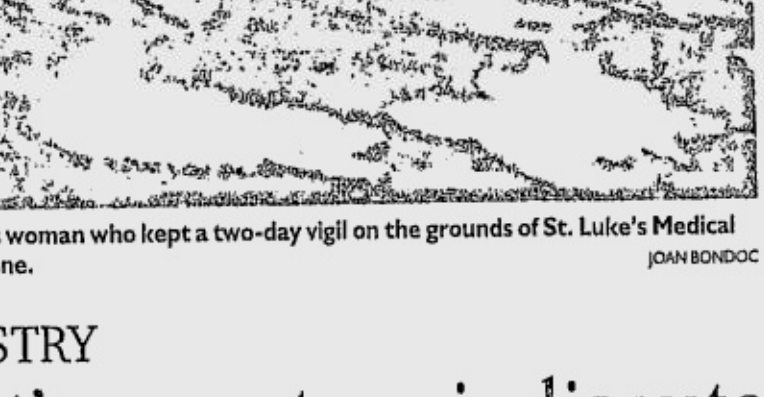
By Emmie G. Velarde
Assistant Entertainment Editor

A WHOLE GENERATION of moviegoers believed that, when it came time for him to depart, he'd ride off into the sunset on one of his prized horses, unhurried and quietly smiling, having exacted the justice he had sought for whatever terrible wrong had been done to him.

Instead, the hero who had worn many hats and gone by many names onscreen and off—each one a necessary component of the all-encompassing "Da King"—was felled by an invisible foe that was *tahimik nguni't mapanganib* (quiet but lethal) like one of his many memorable movie personas.

Fernando "Ronnie" Poe Jr. has passed on. He rests in peace now, a state that doesn't seem to be an immediate prospect for grief-stricken family and friends, devoted fans, adoring co-workers in the movie industry, and rabid po-

ANG ALAMAT/ A22



GOTCHA! One of 12 bank robbers (above) lies cornered inside a warehouse by the rapid and award-winning response of the Valenzuela police. The pursuit goes on (at left) after the Banco de Oro robbery at Paso de Blas, Valenzuela, Bulacan. *(Story in Metro, Page A23.)* ERIK ARAZAS

FPJ election protest lives on, say lawyers

By Philip C. Tubeza and Michael Lim Ubac

LEGAL eagles agree: "Da King" is dead but his election protest lives on.

Sixto Brillantes Jr., the lawyer of Fernando Poe Jr., yesterday said the actor's legal challenge to President Macapagal-Arroyo could still proceed despite his death.

Former Solicitor General Frank Chavez also said an election protest did not cease with the death of the losing candidate, thus correcting allies of Ms Arroyo who had said that the case was rendered moot by the death of her political rival.

Brillantes said former Sen. Loren Legarda, Poe's running mate, could "substitute" as the complainant behind the protest pending before the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET). "Loren will continue the fight. It has to

FPJ ELECTION/ A20

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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2004

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of the country will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers becoming frequent over Bicol region and Eastern Visayas. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/15/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Catarman	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

Citigroup unimpressed by reforms

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

UNITED States banking giant Citigroup remains unimpressed by the gains made by the Arroyo administration in trimming the budget deficit, saying these had been achieved largely by cutting down on vital spending rather than increasing revenues.

In its weekly review of Asian economies dated Dec. 2, Citigroup noted the "sharp reduction in the October fiscal gap but it should be regarded as a positive one-off."

The government proudly reported a P5.8-billion budget deficit in October, against the P23.8-billion estimate, which kept the budget deficit in the first 10 months at P147.7 billion, significantly lower than Citigroup's estimate of P165 billion.

But Citigroup did not share the government's enthusiasm.

"Much of the sharp fiscal gains in October came by way of expenditure compression. We've seen this in 2001 only for expenditures to recoil back up in 2002 leading to massive slippage, and accelerated government borrowings," the report said.

Citigroup noted that non-interest expenditures have contracted by 26.5 percent in October and government spending outside its loan payments has increased by only 3.1 percent in the first 10 months this year.

"This is consistent with our view that government plans to suppress the non-interest side of the budget in the post-election or second half of 2004 with emphasis on capital outlays," Citigroup said.

Streamlined expenditures

Citigroup said the streamlined expenditures should be accompanied by significant revenue gains to ensure that the budget deficit remains at manageable levels.

It noted that the government has yet to make "fundamental adjustments" in terms of revenue collections because Congress, despite being dominated by the President's allies, has not passed a single tax measure.

Congress' dillydallying on the President's tax package has forced Malacañang to resort to revenue-raising measures through executive fiat, such as the increase in oil tariffs from three percent to five percent next month.

"The increase in the oil import tax (which would raise around P5.58 billion) reflects growing frustration in the lack of revenue measures being pushed through Congress," Citigroup said.

Without any new revenue measures, credit-risk agencies would be justified in their view that the government was not serious in solving its fiscal crisis and that the country has become a bigger credit risk deserving of a credit downgrade.

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CONCEPCION-CARRIER

Vendors' feud eyed in deadly GenSan blast

By Christian V. Esguerra

RIVALRIES between Christian and Muslim vendors were most likely to blame for the weekend blast at the General Santos City market which killed 14 people, though police and military officials said they had not ruled out terrorist activity.

Philippine National Police Chief Edgar Aglipay said authorities had a "good lead, it's not a blank wall anymore," but refused to give further details so as not to prejudice the investigation.

Investigators are focusing on the theory that the bombing was related to a feud between two groups fighting for control of the market, Aglipay said.

"We are not discounting that terrorists were behind the attack in General Santos City and we are investigating all angles here as to the motive of the perpetrators," said Aglipay, who flew to the city to investigate the explosion.

Local police raided the house of a Muslim vendor but did not find him there, said Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, Armed Forces information officer.

Four days ago, Pascual said the vendor had threatened to burn the General Santos public market after he was allegedly beaten up by Christian vendors.

The way the bomb was planted also boosted the police and military theory. It was left on top of the metal cover of a stall belonging to the president of the Christian vendors' association, Pascual said.

A fragment of the bomb indicated that it was a blue metal-covered and rocket-propelled grenade attached to a timing device.

"It was placed there so it seems that the lead pertaining to the Muslim-Christian conflict is indeed strong," Pascual said in Filipino.

Supt. Willie Dangane, the city police chief, has said "we are looking into the angle that there is a misunderstanding in the business sector of the public market."

Rival groups

Recent reports have said that two rival groups have been quarreling for control of the market and had almost exchanged gunfire in one incident.

If the blast was indeed the handiwork of a disgruntled vendor, Aglipay said it was still possible that the vendor might also have hired "someone who had the capability to carry out such an attack."

That's why authorities are looking into the possibility that a member of a Moro Islamic Liberation Front "lost command" or even the Abu Sayyaf had been tapped by disgruntled vendors for the job, Aglipay said.

"We're exploring all angles. We're still not discounting the terrorism angle or the possibility that the attack was a form of retaliation by the group of slain MILF man Jack Andapuan," he said.

Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes yesterday vowed to arrest the perpetrators of the General Santos blast.

"This cowardly attack on innocent civilians will not go unpunished," Reyes said in a statement.

He said he had "directed local government and police authorities to speed up their investigation of the incident to identify the bombers and their motives."

Reyes refused to speculate who were behind the attack, saying that he would "rather wait for the result of the investigation" as he urged the public to help the authorities in their investigation.

Local police authorities earlier said terrorists were behind the blast, citing recent threats.

Mindanao has been rocked by bombing attacks in recent years allegedly carried out by Muslim extremists with ties to foreign terror groups.

The homemade bomb, consisting of TNT packed with pieces of metal, ripped through the public market of the city of half a million people on Sunday afternoon, killing 14 and wounding 70 others.

General Santos, one of the biggest cities in Mindanao, has been troubled by decades of Muslim separatist rebellion as well as Islamic militants.

A similar blast blamed on Islamic militants left several people dead at a shopping mall in April 2001. *With reports from Nelson Flores, Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and AFP*

Don't shoot at GIs on relief mission, NPA urged

By TJ Burgonio

FOREIGN Secretary Alberto Romulo yesterday asked local communist rebels not to fire on the American troops helping in relief operations in the typhoon-ravaged provinces of Luzon.

Romulo said the rebels should "forget" their ideological differences with the government amid efforts by both public and private agencies, as well as foreign countries, to provide relief for the storm victims.

"This is a time that we should forget any differences that we have and concentrate on our efforts, first, to save our countrymen and try to give them aid," he told reporters in a chance interview at the DFA.

"Second, [let's] help provide them with their needs like clothing and food, medicine, shelter. Maybe after these [relief operations], we can be political again," he said.

NPA warning

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the New People's Army, had warned the US troops not to conduct military operations but to merely provide humanitarian aid, or face attack.

"It would be wise for the American troops to refrain from undertaking military operations in the area including intelligence-related activities," Rosal said in a statement.

"They are dangerously close to NPA guerrilla zones, and it would be prudent for them to confine themselves to areas where actual relief operations are underway in order to avoid unnecessary encounters," he added.

Over 600 troops from US bases in the Asia-Pacific region are in the country "to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief" for the victims.

Hundreds of thousands were displaced in the aftermath of four storms that battered the country in the past weeks.

As of last week, the Department of Foreign Affairs had received a total of $3.1 million in emergency assistance from foreign countries, international agencies and non-government organizations.

On top of the disaster funds, foreign countries also dispatched teams of doctors and relief workers to the devastated areas.

$7-M relief

So far, the relief mission being conducted by the United States military in Luzon has cost the US Department of Defense at least $7 million, Ambassador Francis Ricciardone said Tuesday.

Brig. Gen. Kenneth Glueck, commanding general of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, said the humanitarian mission, the first undertaken by the US military in the Philippines since the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo and the closure of the American bases in 1991, involved more than 900 troops, 18 aircraft and one ship.

Ricciardone said the five-day mission, which started Sunday at Clark air base in Pampanga, a former American facility, was one of the largest the US had conducted with the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

On top of the amount that covered expenditures for fuel, equipment and personnel, Americans donated $500,000, Ricciardone said.

US helicopters have made eight flights daily, distributing 37,653 kg of goods to Nakar and Real in Quezon and Baler and San Luis in Aurora as of Monday, according to a report from the Base Disaster Response Coordinating Center.

The center, based at the Haribon Complex south of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport here, is programmed to ferry 80,634 kg of goods, said Florita Villar, regional director of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Ricciardone said the "revived and revitalized" relationship between the US and the Philippines made these combined relief missions possible.

"There's nothing like being at war together on the global war on terrorism to see how that alliance, the exercises we do all the time and have done for some years, pays off for us," he said. "This is just one more example of how the relationship matters to both our countries."

With Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Geologist urges gov't to draw up hazard map

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Geologist Raymundo Punongbayan urged the government to produce hazard maps of areas prone to flash floods to prevent a repeat of the landslides that killed more than 1,000 people in Nueva Ecija, Aurora and Quezon provinces recently.

Punongbayan, the former chief of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, said few such maps exist because flash floods were still "ill-understood and unappreciated" in the Philippines.

In a related development, press reports said the Netherlands has terminated a P574-million grant to save the northern Sierra Madre mountain range from illegal logging due to a lack of support from both national and local officials.

The decision was made earlier this month following the storms that lashed Luzon, causing flash floods and destroying towns and villages and covering thousands of hectares in thick mud.

Much of the damage was attributed to illegal logging in the Sierra Madre where soil, boulders and logs were washed down the sides of mountains by torrents of water destroying anything in its path.

Punongbayan described a flash flood as the "sudden onrush down a river valley of an unusually large volume of water, usually carrying a lot of sediments and floating debris, mostly trees and plants, and deposits its load at the valley mouth."

"Flash floods commonly occur during long duration heavy rains that induce landslides whose deposits can form dams across constricted segments of river valley and impound runoff and river water upstream," he said.

While flash floods are regular occurrences in the country, there has been "no effort on the part of the government here and elsewhere in the world to pursue the generation and production of flash flood hazard maps," he said.

He said there were some small areas that have been mapped but not many of these maps were based on "good science."

Punongbayan said it was important for government to produce the maps because people "have settled in river deltas, alluvial fans and valley floors."

These areas are where the affected residents in Nueva Ecija, Aurora and Quezon have settled. Located east of Luzon, these straddle the Sierra Madre mountain ranges and face the Pacific Ocean.

Historically, communities grew outward from and along major rivers, making them highly vulnerable to floods and flash floods, Punongbayan said.

Villages in the foothills of deep slopes and tall mountains face real risks, he said.

But he said the phenomenon of flash floods was only vaguely understood by decision-makers and planners who tend to advance whatever reasons are most convenient for why they occur.

These reasons include illegal logging, slash-and-burn farming, erosive winds, forest denudation and erosion, geologic faults, too much rain and waterspout.

Punongbayan said producing hazard maps was not an expensive undertaking. For starters, geologists could initially provide the maps and aerial photographs, he said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk, with AFP*

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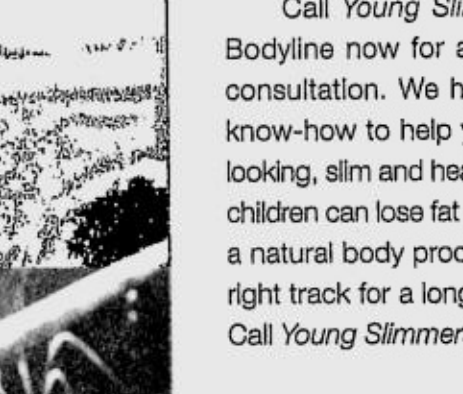

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❄ Always unplug Christmas lights before replacing light bulbs or fuses.

❄ Do not install electrical lights on metallic Christmas trees.

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Gov't rules out Tarongoy rescue

By TJ Burgonio

THE PHILIPPINE government has ruled out the use of military force to rescue Filipino hostage Robert Tarongoy in Iraq for fear this would endanger his life, according to Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo yesterday.

A team headed by Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis had been tasked by President Macapagal-Arroyo to work on the release of Tarongoy, a 31-year-old accountant who was seized by gunmen on Nov. 1 along with five other foreign nationals inside the Saudi Arabian Trading and Constructing Co. (Satco) in Mansour district in Baghdad.

The deadline set by Ms Arroyo for the team to resolve the abduction is supposed to end today, Tarongoy's 44th day in captivity.

Romulo said he was not aware of any plans by Seguis or even the Iraqi government to send a crack team to rescue Tarongoy and an American captive. The other hostages, a Nepalese and three Iraqis, had been freed.

"Like what I said, we don't want to leave any stone unturned but we are not doing things that would jeopardize their security and safety. We are doing our best," Romulo told reporters following the opening of a photo exhibit marking the first death anniversary of the late Secretary Blas F. Ople.

Officials have kept the pressure on Tarongoy's employer to step up the negotiations to ensure that he would be freed unharmed, Romulo said.

The Philippine government, which maintains a no-ransom policy, had asked Satco to address the kidnappers' demand for a $10-million ransom in exchange for Tarongoy's release.

"The biggest problem is that they are not releasing the hostage," Romulo said when asked about the biggest problem faced by the team of negotiators. "That's the same problem we had with Nayan; they were not releasing Nayan."

Nayan, 34, a diplomat, and two other UN poll workers were freed unharmed on Nov. 23 in Afghanistan, after 26 days in captivity.

HK to mark site of Jose Rizal home

HONG KONG—The site of national hero Dr. Jose Rizal's former residence in Hong Kong will be marked with a commemorative plaque, the government said Tuesday.

The Philippine consulate general proposed marking Rednaxela Terrace, the street where Rizal's home once stood, and Hong Kong's Antiquities Advisory Board has approved the idea, government spokesperson Addy Wong said.

Rizal's building was also known as Rednaxela Terrace, which was actually meant to be Alexander but was spelled backward by a painter, the South China Morning Post reported.

Rizal lived there with his family from December 1891 to June 1892, the consulate general said in a statement.

It said the commemorative plaque will be unveiled Dec. 30, the 108th anniversary of Rizal's execution in 1896 by the Philippines' then-Spanish rulers.

Rizal settled briefly in Hong Kong as a practicing ophthalmologist, after he was banished from the Philippines by Spanish colonizers for writing and publishing a novel that exposed the corruption of the Catholic Church in Spain.

A similar plaque already exists at the site of a Hong Kong clinic where Rizal once worked. Hong Kong has also marked a local site where the first Philippine national flag was sewn.

As of the end of 2003, Filipinos were the largest minority in Hong Kong with a population of nearly 133,000. Many of them work as maids in this wealthy territory. *AP*

Correction

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a photo caption in the Metro section on Page A21 inadvertently stated that the Battlefield of Zapote monument stands in Parañaque City. The monument is located at the boundary of Las Piñas City and Bacoor, Cavite.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to Gerry Lirio, city editor, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City; fax Nos. 897-4793/94; e-mail addresses:glirio@inquirer.com.ph and daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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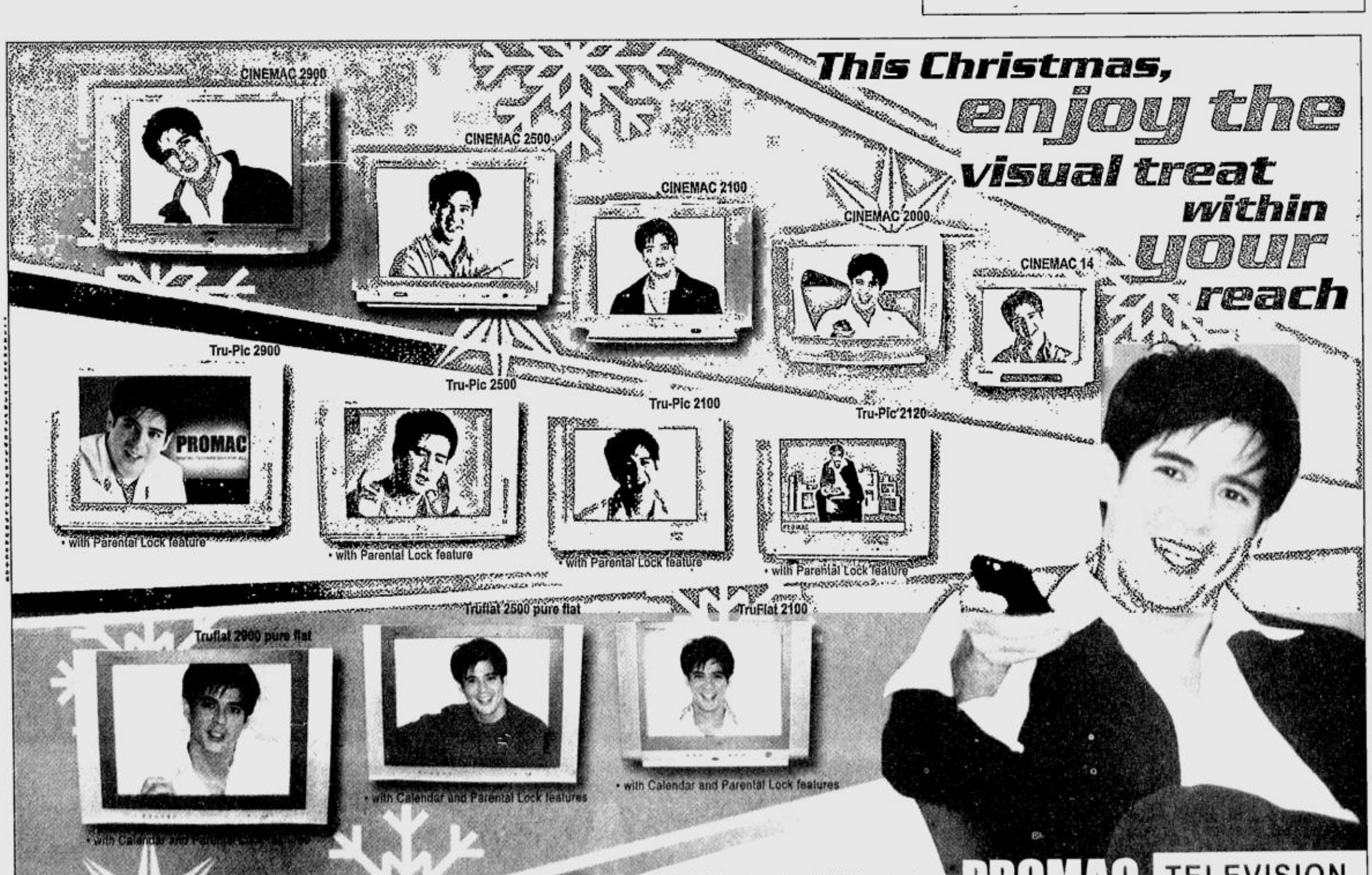

Tobacco farmers, workers seek fair tax hike of cigarettes

THOUSANDS of tobacco farmers and cigarette factory workers rallied at the Senate on Monday to clamor for a fair increase on the taxes of cigarettes to protect local brands, local jobs and the future of their children.

More than 3,000 members of the Fortune Tobacco Corp. (FTC) Labor Union and farmer organizations from Northern Luzon appealed to senators to impose moderate tax increases on cigarettes, particularly low-priced brands. They claimed that proposals imposing extremely high levies on low-priced cigarettes without a corresponding tax increase on high-end brands was not only unfair but would lead to less sales, reduced production and the loss of thousands of jobs.

There are 10,000 workers involved in the manufacture of low-priced cigarettes and about 65,000 tobacco farmers nationwide, the protesters said in a press statement. These sectors are responsible for producing low-priced cigarettes consumed by poor Filipinos. They are currently up in arms against the perceived bias for high-end cigarettes which will be spared from any tax increase in the next three years.

Larry Punzalan, secretary general of the Fortune Tobacco workers' union, said they trooped to the Senate to air their grievances. "The Senate has been discussing this tax bill, but it seems that the workers are not being heard or consulted. Since our security of tenure and the livelihood of our members are at stake, we have a right to be heard on this issue," Punzalan said.

Farmer-leaders from the Philippine Association of Tobacco-based Cooperatives, Ilocos Sur Farmers' Association, La Union Tobacco Farmers' Cooperative and Ilocos Farmers' Cooperative also appealed for fairness in the tax treatment of low-priced brands.

Farmer-leader Nestor Rodriguez said that if taxes on the low-priced brands were raised 400 percent, sales of low-grade tobacco leaves they produce would surely drop and result in the loss of thousands of jobs.

The farmers and workers also raised the issue of smuggling and its adverse impact on the local cigarette industry.

"They're discussing taxes only on local cigarettes. But what about the smuggled cigarettes that go through the Duty Free outlets? Why should the poor carry the burden of increased taxes? What about the rich who patronize the smuggled and imported brands?" farmer-leader Nestor Cachola said.

Senate adopts compromise on sin taxes

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE SENATE adopted last night a compromise version of the sin taxes seeking higher rates on cigarette products despite Sen. Joker Arroyo's last-minute objection to the passage of tax measures this year.

But as of press time, the final version of Senate Bill No. 1815 had yet to be formally voted on in plenary session. Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. had expected majority of the nine-member opposition bloc to support the administration measure.

"Our amendments were accepted, so it's a bipartisan support," said Pimentel.

Early in the day, the two Senate blocs agreed to pass the bill to help generate revenues for the cash-strapped Arroyo administration and solve its fiscal woes.

As of 6:30 p.m., the latest version of the sin taxes was more than double the current excise tax on low-priced brands of cigarettes such as Fortune, Champion and Liberty, which are mostly consumed by poor smokers.

Once enacted, the excise tax per pack of cigarettes on low-tier brands would rise from the current P1.12 to P3 on the first year, and subsequently increase every two years (P3.27 in 2007, P3.55 in 2009, and P3.84 in 2011).

Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, had wanted the increase to remain at P2.24 per pack, but upon Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile's motion, the Senate decided to raise it.

Senate President Franklin Drilon and Sen. Edgardo Angara expect the higher tax rate to easily generate between P15 billion to P18 billion.

The House of Representatives, under House Bill No. 3174, wants only a 20-percent increase in excise taxes on alcohol and tobacco products.

In a privilege speech Monday, Arroyo decried the undue haste by which Malacañang wanted the proposed tax measures passed by Congress.

The maverick senator accused Malacañang of dangling the threat of a credit downgrade to push Congress into passing tax measures before the Christmas break.

But House Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said that a credit downgrade is "not a joke."

"The President cannot afford to joke on our economy or even make a false assessment of our situation. This is no joking matter," Nograles said.

Recto admitted that the excise taxes and the value-added tax would be shouldered by the consumers.

Another amendment to the bill was the deletion of the tax exemptions of cigarettes and alcohol products being sold in duty-free shops to raise P5 billion in additional revenues.

Recto clarified that these products would continue to be exempted from VAT and customs duties, but not excise taxes.

The third amendment was the reduction of the excise tax on cigars from the committee report version of 20 percent of net retail price to 10 percent.

At the House of Representatives, Rep. Robert Ace Barbers (Lakas, Surigao del Norte) yesterday branded Malacañang's tax program as incoherent.

Barbers said it was unfair to blame Congress for any credit downgrade by international ratings agencies "when it is the incoherent and indecisive moves of the Palace in sponsoring manifestly conflicting and haphazardly crafted bills that are leading this country straight to the slaughterhouse."

He cited the "watered-down" bill on cigarettes and alcohol products and the withdrawal of the proposed franchise tax on telecommunications companies.

He also noted the conflict between the proposed attrition bill and the tax amnesty bill.

"These incoherent actions are symptomatic of a person seriously suffering from a stroke," Barbers said. *With a report from Carlito Pablo*

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No break . . .

From page A1

not the top brass of the Philippine National Police.

The PNP has barred all policemen from going on vacation during the Yuletide season.

In a memorandum, Chief Supt. Nicolas Pasinos Jr. reminded all policemen that the holiday break normally extended them was "not a privilege, hence it is not imperative to assert one's right for its enjoyment."

Pasinos, PNP director for personnel records and management, learned that several policemen had applied for vacation leave or mandatory leave of absence so they could have a longer Christmas break.

Full alert

Apparently, it had made no difference to crime-weary policemen that the PNP was on full alert, especially after the General Santos City bombing on Sunday that left 14 people dead and 70 wounded. 'Tis, after all, the season to be jolly, not to disarm bombs.

Pasinos made the decision to suspend all vacation leaves to make sure that the "delivery of police services would not be affected or hampered" during the Christmas season.

He directed all field and office commanders to reject all leave applications which would take effect between Dec. 15 to Jan. 10.

Recalled if ...

"Those who are [already] on a break can be recalled anytime if the exigency of the service so demands," Pasinos said in the memorandum, reiterating a long-standing policy within the police force.

The no-vacation policy, among other measures, has disappointed the 115,000 men of the PNP.

PNP Director General Edgar Aglipay earlier banned cops from soliciting gifts during the holidays, a common practice which is actually a subtle form of extortion.

The PNP made a similar appeal to the public—to refrain from soliciting gifts, in cash or in kind, from any police officer.

There will be no Christmas party either at Camp Crame.

Instead, all police units based in the main headquarters will donate their respective budgets for parties to the victims of the recent typhoons.

In lieu of a Christmas party, there will be Holy Mass early next week to be attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo and First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

Erap says poll fraud sent FPJ to his grave

OUSTED President Joseph Estrada yesterday claimed that it was despondency over his being allegedly cheated out of an election victory last May that brought his buddy, Fernando Poe Jr., to his grave.

"The problem was he kept everything to himself and did not confide his burden to his close friends," said Estrada, who lamented that his being in detention in his lavish Tanay vacation estate did not allow him to give solace to his friend.

Yesterday, Estrada's lawyer filed a motion in the Sandiganbayan asking the court to move to a later date his Dec. 19 scheduled departure for Hong Kong so he could attend the wake and burial of Poe.

Speaking through his spokesperson Didagen Dilangalen, Estrada said he was "deeply saddened" by the death of his friend of 40 years.

He said Poe had become "even more downhearted when he saw a recent survey showing that 65 percent of the Filipino people believed that he was cheated of victory."

Poe became even more despondent upon learning that the Supreme Court had reset the hearing of his electoral protest against President Macapagal-Arroyo to January.

"That, to him, clearly shows dilatory tactics on the part of the Supreme Court," Estrada said.

In an urgent motion, lawyer Rene Saguisag said Estrada wanted to leave on Dec. 23, the day after the Poe funeral, for his knee replacement operation at the Hong Kong Adventist Hospital.

"He would like to leave on Dec. 23, subject to security concerns to which he is not insensitive," said Saguisag.

"He would like to attend the wake of his lifelong bosom companion, and, if possible, his funeral, and . . . visit his mother before he flies to Hong Kong," Saguisag said.

The petition for a rescheduling of Estrada's departure date was the second requested of the court since it allowed Estrada to leave for Hong Kong on Dec. 1.

Estrada is likely to stay for a month in Hong Kong.

His operation will take three hours and recovery could take three weeks.

Estrada was originally scheduled to be in Hong Kong from Nov. 22 to Dec. 15 but never got to leave as his American doctor Christopher Mow had already returned to the US.

Estrada's son and co-accused in the plunder and perjury case before the anti-graft court, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, has asked the court to be allowed to accompany his father to Hong Kong. *Armand N. Nocum*

Human rights . . .

From page A1

CHUA: I have friends who suffered so this country could be set aright. Their suffering would be in vain if I did nothing.

"I am asked why I'm wasting my time fighting," he said to the INQUIRER when he exposed irregularities at the House of Representatives Electoral Tribunal (HRET) years ago. "I have friends who suffered so this country could be set aright. Their suffering would be in vain if I did nothing."

At the time of his death, Chua was managing partner of Arroyo Chua Caedo and Coronel Law Offices (formerly Azcuna Yorac Arroyo and Chua Law Offices).

Courted danger

As legal counsel for Citizens' Action Against Crime (Caac) and for kidnap victims, he and his law partners courted danger. They successfully prosecuted more than 20 kidnap-for-ransom cases, mostly pro bono (for free). Their Caac-assisted efforts resulted in a 100-percent conviction rate for crime perpetrators and 80-percent death penalty sentences. Although Chua was not in favor of the death penalty, he prosecuted the cases to their limits, Caac chair Teresita Ang See said.

Chua also helped the kidnap victims, mostly middle-class Chinese-Filipinos with small businesses, tell their stories to the media so that their plight may be known.

Chua was legal counsel for the Foundation for Worldwide People Power and the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism.

Helping PDI

He also had helped in several INQUIRER investigative stories by supplying crucial firsthand and well-researched information and insights. He often alerted his journalist friends about stories that were crying out to be written.

A campus writer during his student activist days, Chua studied at Xavier School and De La Salle University where he was editor of the La Sallian. He finished law at the University of the Philippines in 1983.

Unwilling to still his pen, he wrote articles for Nassa News of the then militant National Secretariat for Social Action of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines even while he pursued his law studies. Chua was the anonymous publisher/editor behind the well-remembered underground publication Sick of the Times that satirized the Marcos dictatorship through biting jokes, essays and illustrations.

After passing the bar exam, Chua became a member of Mabini, a human rights group composed of lawyers who aided victims of injustice.

Good government

Also a civil rights advocate, Chua was among those who initiated and won cases seeking to uphold the right to information (Aquino-Sarmiento vs Morato et al.) and freedom of expression (Gonzales vs Kalaw-Katigbak et al.), and to protect Filipinos against discriminatory practices (ISAE vs Quisumbing et al.).

As counsel for then Makati Rep. Joker Arroyo in 1992, Chua exposed a syndicate in the HRET that manipulated and corrupted results of electoral protests. This led to the dismissal of several HRET officials and staff.

Chua assisted the government's peace efforts by acting as personal confidential liaison of then National Unification Commission chair Haydee Yorac and the insurgents. He lent a hand to the Presidential Commission on Good Government under Yorac to bring to media attention some aspects of the coco levy imposition during martial law that left coconut farmers as poor as ever.

Chua recently raised a furor in the media when former first lady Imelda Marcos filed a case against the PCGG because the commission had called her husband "a thief and dictator." The irony was not lost on Chua and he did not let the issue pass.

Last year, Chua received the Jose Rizal Award for Excellence sponsored by The Manila Times and the Chinese-Filipino community.

Tireless pursuit of justice

"Chua's tireless pursuit of justice has resulted in not only court victories," the citation read, "but has also opened the nation's eyes to the plight of the victims and the imperfections in our judicial system."

Said Senator Arroyo: "He was a great champion and eloquent advocate for the public interest and human rights. He had an exceptional talent that made a significant impact on the legal profession. He was a man of unimpeachable integrity and reputation."

Passion, conviction

His law partner and former Constitutional Commissioner Felicitas Aquino-Arroyo said: "He was a man who approached life with passion and conviction. I will miss him personally. He left a void."

Chua is survived by his wife Betty Ong Chua, children Brian Kim, Derek Ken and Kristel Kara, and three brothers.

His remains lie at the Capilla de Nuestro Señor at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati. The funeral Mass will be held on Dec. 18 at 8 a.m. to be followed by his cremation at Heritage Park in Fort Bonifacio.

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6 coal miners trapped

SIX COAL miners were trapped after a coal mine's roof collapsed in Diplahan, Zamboanga Sibugay, a government-run oil exploration company said Tuesday.

Philippine National Oil Company Exploration Corp. said the coal development shafts had been operated in joint venture with Taiwan Overseas Mining Corp. since 1999.

The affected mine development shaft is about 56 meters deep.

PNOC-EC president and chief executive Eduardo Mahalac said rescue efforts were underway to save the miners.

"We have received initial reports from the site that the rescue team has already spotted two of the trapped miners about two meters away from them," Mahalac said. "The rescue team has also heard sounds from the pipes indicating the conscious presence of the other trapped miners."

It was not clear what caused the shaft's roof to collapse. AP

Misamis shabu lab busted

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE GOVERNMENT has dismantled another drug laboratory, arresting two Chinese and seizing huge volumes of shabu-making equipment in an obscure town in Misamis Oriental, authorities announced yesterday.

It was the 11th shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) lab to be discovered in the country this year, according to Deputy Director General Ricardo de Leon, the police anti-drugs czar.

The raid on the abandoned Mindanao International Concrete Products Manufacturing Corp. warehouse in Barangay Loguilo, Alubijid, led to the arrest of Peter Yu So and Jack Dy Chua on Monday, said Anselmo Avenido Jr., Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency director.

Seized from the lab were precursors and other chemicals used to manufacture high-grade shabu.

Among these were plastic containers of red powder, black granules, white flakes and yellowish liquid. There were also liquefied petroleum gas tanks, a weighing scale, ice buckets, a funnel and a plastic container with a small amount of power.

PDEA operatives, backed by local police, stormed the lab on the strength of a search warrant issued by a Misamis municipal trial court.

De Leon said the Misamis raid strongly indicated that drug traffickers had transferred their operations outside Metro Manila following the series of raids that dismantled several laboratories in the metropolis.

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LOW-GRADE FEVER

Cardinal Sin back in hospital

By Blanche S. Rivera

RETIRED Manila Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin is back in the hospital.

Sin was brought to the Cardinal Santos Medical Center Sunday afternoon after he developed a low-grade fever, a source in the archdiocese of Manila said.

He remains in the intensive care unit but is conscious and stable, the source said. Aside from his immediate family, Sin's visitors have included current Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales and Balanga Bishop Soc Villegas, his former secretary.

"He is alert and wants to go home," the source said.

Sin's private nurses advised that the cardinal be admitted to the hospital to make sure he did not suffer any complications from the fever.

This is the second time in three months the cardinal, who rose to worldwide fame after leading two bloodless revolts in the Philippines, was confined in the hospital.

Sin was rushed to Cardinal Santos on Oct. 11 after he suffered an *arrythmia*, or irregular heartbeat, and subsequent congestive heart failure while undergoing dialysis at his residence at Villa San Miguel in Mandaluyong City. He was in the hospital for 17 days.

Sin, 76, undergoes dialysis thrice a week after suffering kidney failure. He has been wheelchair-bound since early this year and rarely presides over Mass anymore.

Manila's longest-serving archbishop, who led the archdiocese for 29 years, suffered a stroke in March last year and was released from the hospital after about a week of confinement.

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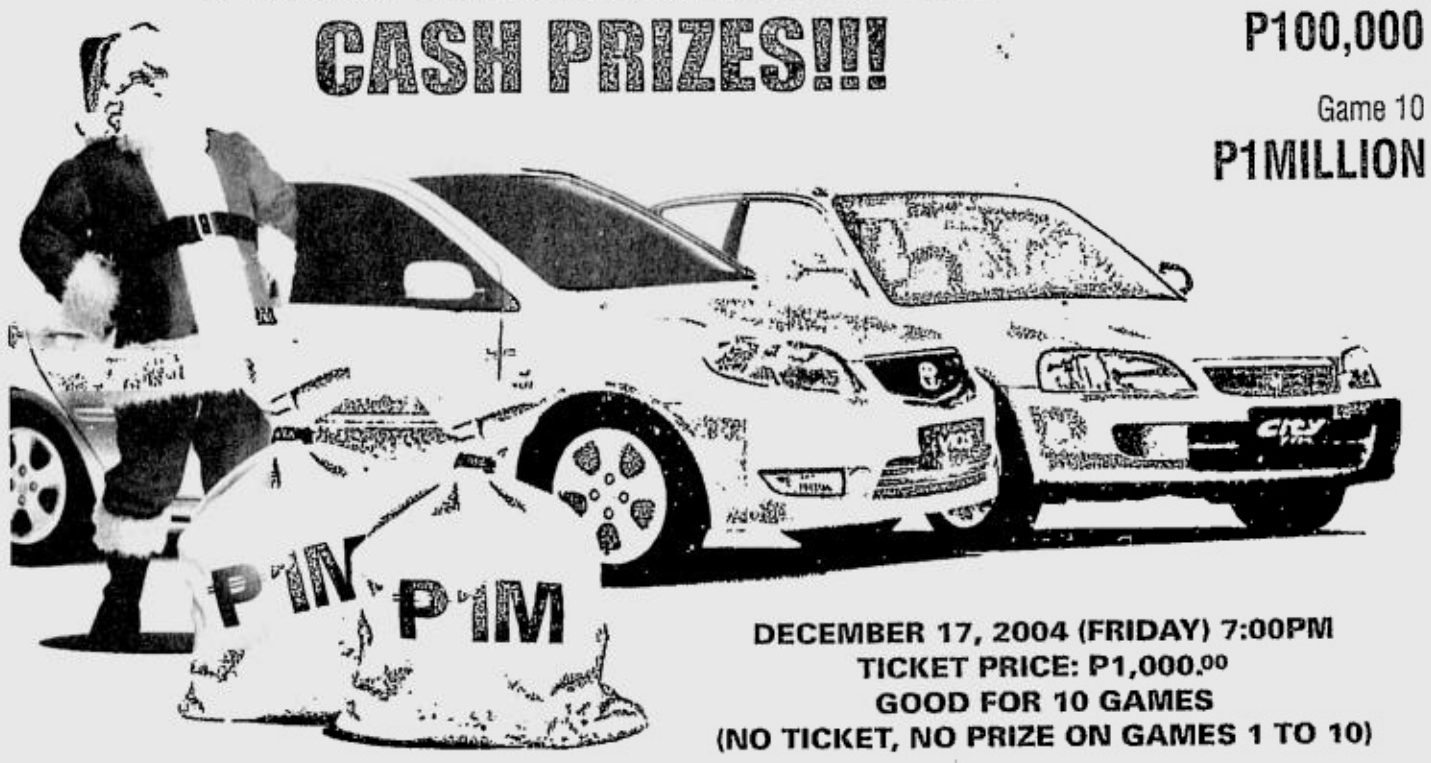

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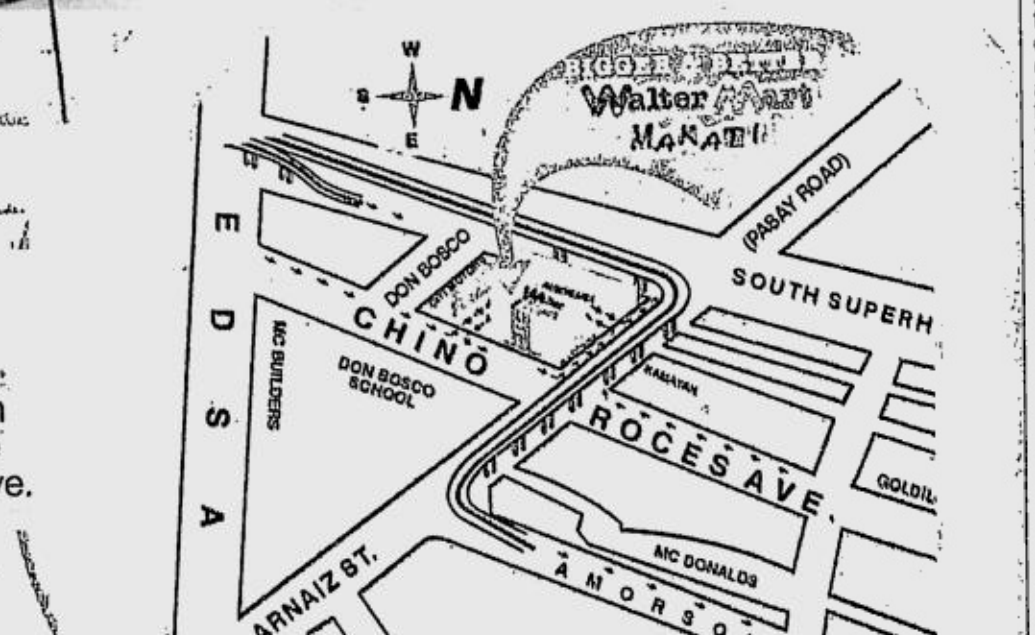

Located at the heart of Makati City, at the corner of Pasong Tamo (Chino Roces Avenue) and Pasay Road (Arnaiz Avenue), is a bigger and better Walter Mart Makati Community Shopping Center which has now opened its doors to everyone in time for the holidays.

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Now open at the ground floor of the new mall are Mercury Drug, Jollibee, Chowking, Red Ribbon and Taiko Japanese Restaurant. The flagship store of Walter Mart Supermarket is located at the 2nd floor, along with Fuji Mart, Hen Lin and other food establishments. Abenson Appliances is now open at the 4th floor. The 5th level will showcase all-digital state-of-the-art theaters before the year ends.

A complete roster of tenants will soon open at the new Walter Mart Makati Community Shopping Center. These include Abea Lifestyle Furniture Store, Watsons Personal Care store, Starbucks, Bibliarch, Robinsons Department Store, Alexis, Ideal Vision, Picture City, Kitaro, Bread Works, Max's Fried Chicken, and a host of other complimentary tenants.

Going to the new Walter Mart Supermarket in Makati has also never been easier! There are vehicular and pedestrian access routes from both the Pasong Tamo (Chino Roces Avenue) and Pasay Road (Arnaiz Avenue) sides, and over 300 available parking spaces in the basement and ground floors. Within the new Walter Mart Makati Community Shopping Center, there are all floor elevators and escalators, as well as walkalators from the lower ground floor parking to the 2nd level.

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Typhoon-hit schools may stretch sked

By Dona Pazzibugan

SCHOOLS in typhoon-ravaged areas will likely have to extend their school calendar beyond March.

Education Secretary Florencio Abad said he has allowed local superintendents to declare the extension of classes as they see fit.

Classes were suspended in the 1,180 schools damaged by the typhoons, as well as in the schools that were used as evacuation centers.

Undersecretary for operations Ramon Bacani said 120 schools were totally destroyed.

He said classes in some affected areas have resumed.

But in the most affected parts of Quezon and Aurora, classes would likely resume either in late January or early February, he said.

"It's very possible that classes will be extended up to April or even up to May," Bacani said.

Just to resume classes, some students in Camarines Sur used barangay centers, chapels and whatever available community buildings. Some schools went into double shifts.

In Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija, and in Dingalan, Aurora, the DepEd said classes could still not resume.

In Quezon, two teachers were reported to be among the fatalities in the typhoons.

Bacani said that, elsewhere, schools have to hold make-up classes to make up for the days when classes were suspended due to typhoons.

He said schools could either hold make-up classes during the weekends, or just hold longer class hours.

Abad said the teachers have to make sure that students attend the make-up classes.

"It's not our policy to just pass these students to the next grade," he said.

Bicol (Region 5) reported the highest damage with 599 schools damaged by the typhoons amounting to P165.28 million.

Camarines Sur was the worst-hit province, suffering P117 million in damages to 445 schools.

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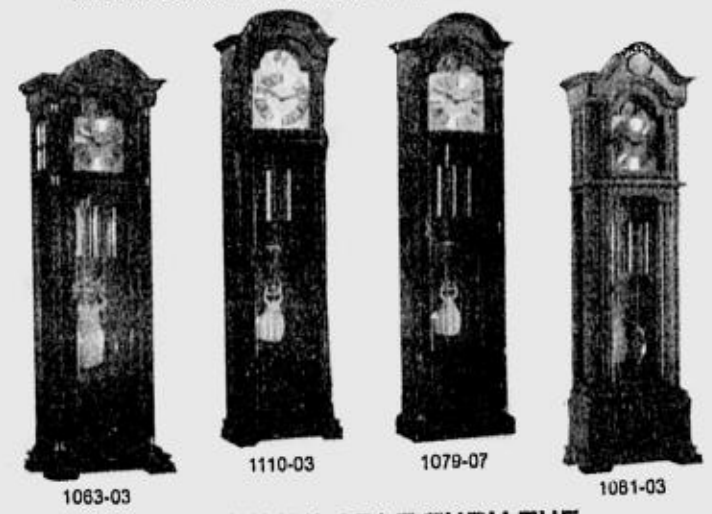

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DepEd recalls 1M erroneous textbooks

IN AN unprecedented move, the Department of Education (DepEd) has decided to recall over a million copies of an erroneous history textbook from public high schools as an "emergency measure."

Education officials said yesterday 1.147 million copies of "Asya: Noon, Ngayon at sa Hinaharap," which contained gross errors, will be replaced with a new book hopefully beginning January next year.

The new book, simply titled "Pag-aaral ng mga Bansang Asyana," was written by 18 University of the Philippines professors and edited by Prof. Grace Estela Mateo of the UP Department of Social Sciences.

Working 'round the clock since October, the UP professors rewrote the textbook's last few chapters, which would be taken up in the third- and fourth-quarter periods. They are still working on the rest of the chapters.

The DepEd grudgingly admitted in October that Marian School supervisor Antonio Go was right in saying that "Asya" was riddled with errors in each of its 316 pages. Go, who is on a personal crusade against erroneous textbooks, has been pointing out these errors to DepEd since 2001.

Published by SD Publications, "Asya" was authored by Teofista Vivar, Ruth Fuentes, Evelina Villoria and the late Remedios Quiray.

"We'll get 'Asya' from the schools and we'll replace them with this new book," Secretary Florencio Abad said yesterday.

Abad earlier ruled out recalling all the copies of "Asya" due to the huge cost and logistics involved.

Undersecretary for programs Fe Hidalgo, who oversaw the rewriting, said they hoped to get the new textbook to the 5,700 public high schools by January.

"This is just an emergency measure," she pointed out, because otherwise students would still be using "Asya" for the next school year.

"Asya" has been used in public and private high schools for the last seven and 13 years, respectively.

Hidalgo said they had turned over the 113-page manuscript to Vibal Publishing House, parent company of SD Publications. Vibal was told to shoulder the entire printing and distribution cost, which could easily run to tens of millions of pesos.

Vibal would also print and distribute 13,000 teacher's manuals.

"The cost is no longer our concern. The publisher is picking up the entire cost. Our concern is [getting] the books to the schools," Undersecretary for finance Juan Miguel Luz said.

He said the 19 UP professors had the copyright of the new textbook. This means Vibal would not be able to sell the new textbook to private schools.

The authors of the new textbook are Profs. Maria Luisa Camagay, Ricardo Jose, Evelyn Miranda, Regulus Tantoco, Alma Bamero, Rowena Quintos-Bailon, Ma. Luisa de Leon-Bolinao, Neil Santillan and Raymund Abejo of the UP History Department; UP history instructors Jerome Ong, Erwin Fernandez and senior lecturer Florina Orillas; Profs. Celestina Boncan and Mary Dorothy dl. Jose of the Social Sciences Department; John Ponsaran, a lecturer at the same department, and Profs. Lydia Agno, Celenia Balonso, Rosita Tadena of the College of Education.

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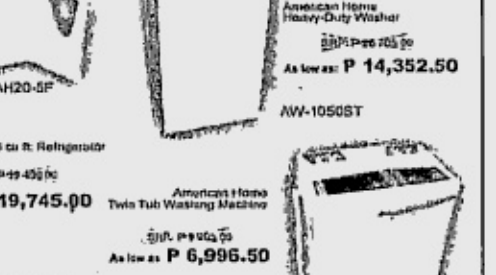

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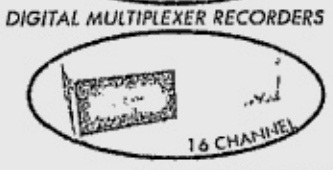

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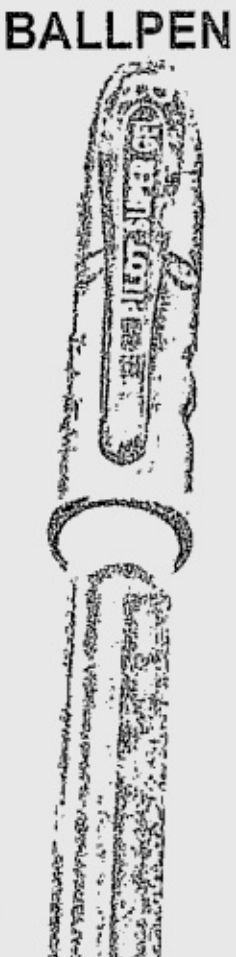

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2004

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

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"Important ecosystem processes, particularly decomposition, pollination and seed dispersal, will likely decline as a result" of the loss of bird species, said Cagan H. Sekercioglu of the Stanford University Center for Conservation Biology.

The forecast of Sekercioglu and colleagues, published online Monday by Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, comes a month after the World Conservation Union reported a continuing loss of species, including an estimate that 12 percent of birds are threatened with extinction.

The Stanford estimate was based on a year of study and a computer calculation of three possible scenarios.

The result was a forecast that between 6 and 14 percent of all bird species will be extinct by 2100 and 700 to 2,500 species will be critically endangered or extinct in the wild.

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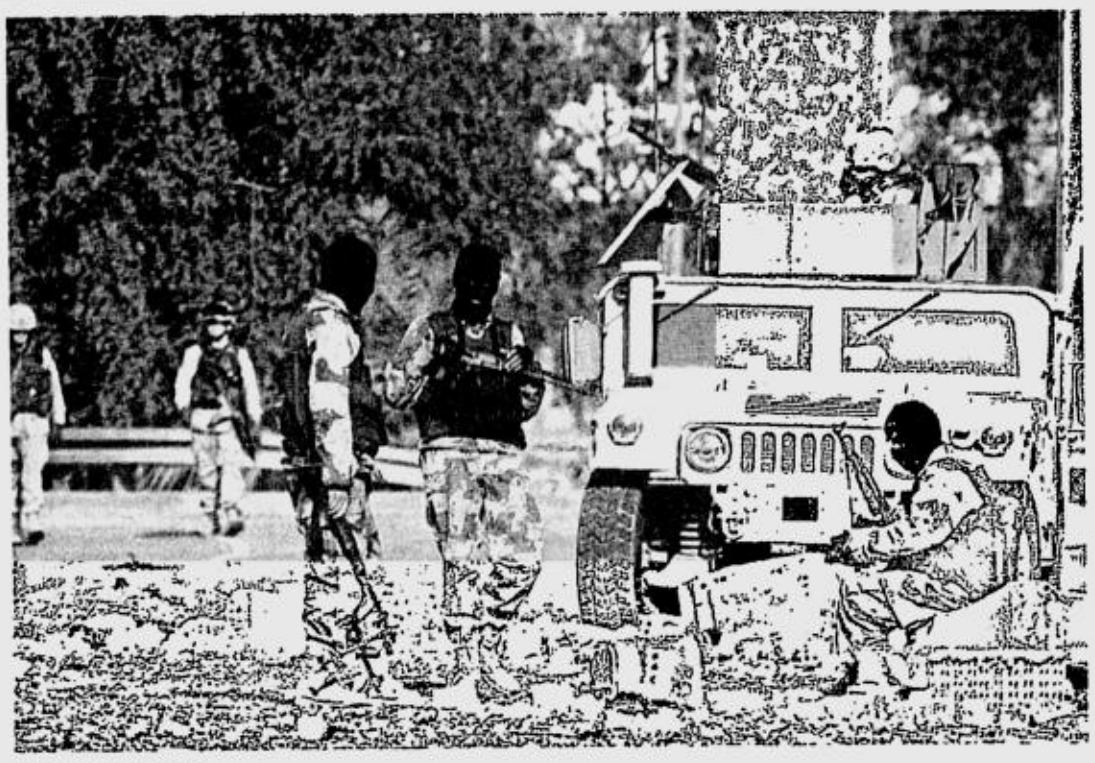

NEW ATTACK
Members of the Iraqi National Guard and US soldiers secure the site where a suicide car bomb exploded near an entrance to Baghdad's Green Zone on Tuesday. The blast occurred at a National Guard recruiting center near the entrance where another suicide bomb killed seven Iraqis the previous day. AFP

WorldBriefs

Car bomb kills 7 anew in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A suicide car bomber killed seven people when he struck a checkpoint at Baghdad's Green Zone early Tuesday, the second attack in two days at the district that houses Iraq's interim government and foreign embassies, officials said. Police Lt. Rafid Abid said the attack was carried out by a suicide bomber. Two Marines assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force were killed in action Monday "while conducting security and stabilization operations" in the vast Anbar province west of Baghdad, the military said Tuesday. *AP*

36 trapped in flooded China mine

BEIJING—Rescuers furiously pumped water Monday from a shaft at a flooded mine in southwest China where 36 workers are missing and feared dead as the country reels from another disaster in the danger-plagued industry. Water gushed into the Xujiaba Tianchi mine in Sinan county Sunday when 80 miners were in the shaft, Wu Ming, an official at the mine, said. Forty-four workers got out safely, but the others were unaccounted for, he said. "Right now we have five pumps working to evacuate the water, we still don't know how deep the water is," Wu said. "At this time it is hard to say if those in the mine have a chance to survive." So far no casualties have been reported. *AFP*

Taiwan president resigns from party

TAIPEI—Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian on Tuesday resigned as leader of the Democratic Progressive Party, taking the blame for last weekend's parliamentary election defeat. Chen stepped down at the first meeting of the party's Central Standing Committee since Saturday's legislative polls. "A-bian (Chen's nickname) here wants to voice my deep apology to the country's supporters," he read from a statement prepared in advance. And "in order to take full responsibility, I have tendered my resignation to the party's Central Standing Committee." Chen's popularity has fallen to a record low of 34 percent after the defeat of his pro-independence alliance in the elections, a survey released Monday said. *AFP*

Darfur rebels suspend peace talks

ABUJA—Darfur rebels suspended formal peace talks in Nigeria on Monday to put pressure on the government to halt an offensive in the vast desert region, delegates said. Rebel negotiators said they would not leave the Nigerian capital Abuja immediately, and were still open to informal consultations, but that the formal talks would not resume until the situation on the ground improved. "We are suspending the talks until the situation has changed and there is a clear commitment that the Sudanese government will stop the offensive," said Bahar Ibrahim, a member of the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement. *Reuters*

Top US officials warned vs AIDS drug

WASHINGTON—Weeks before President George W. Bush announced a plan to protect African babies from AIDS, top US health officials were warned that research on the key drug was flawed and may have underreported severe reactions including deaths, government documents show.

The 2002 warnings about the drug, nevirapine, were serious enough to suspend testing for more than a year, let Uganda's government know of the dangers and prompt the drug's maker to pull its request for permission to use the medicine to protect newborns in the United States.

But the National Institutes of Health, the government's premier health research agency, chose not to inform the White House as it scrambled to keep its experts' concerns from scuttling the use of nevirapine in Africa as a cheap solution, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press.

"Everyone recognized the enormity that this decision could have on the worldwide use of nevirapine to interrupt mother-baby transmission," NIH's AIDS research chief, Dr. Edmund C. Tramont, reported March 14, 2002, to his boss, Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

The documents show Tramont and other NIH officials dismissed the problems with the nevirapine research in Uganda as overblown and were slow to report safety concerns to the Food and Drug Administration.

Records for NIH's nevirapine research in Uganda were so sloppy that NIH investigators couldn't be sure which mothers got the drug. They had to use blood samples to confirm doses, the documents show.

Less than a month after Bush announced a $500 million plan to push nevirapine across Africa to slow the AIDS epidemic, the Health and Human Services Department sent a nine-page letter to Ugandan officials identifying violations of federal patient protection rules by NIH's research. Africa accounts for more than two-thirds of the world's AIDS cases, with 27 million infected.

The NIH research "may have represented a failure to minimize risk to the subjects," the Office of Human Research Protections told Ugandan authorities in summer 2002. *AP*

Indian train collision kills at least 50

NEW DELHI—Fifty people were killed and around 150 injured Tuesday when two passenger trains collided head-on in the northern Indian state of Punjab, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.

Singh made the statement in the state assembly in the Punjab capital Chandigarh. There has been substantial damage to four bogies of the two trains, he added.

Indian news agencies and media reported that dozens had been hurt in the crash.

"The cause of the accident is not known," Yadav added before leaving for the crash site near Mansar village 150 km east of the holy Sikh city of Amritsar in Punjab state.

Mulkha Raj Sharma, station superintendent in the city of Jammu, the winter capital of Indian Kashmir, said the trains had collided head-on.

The Army was called out to help in the rescue efforts and cranes had arrived at the crash scene near Mansar, witnesses said.

Villagers near the crash site in the heart of rural India helped in frantic efforts to free trapped passengers. *AFP, Reuters*

T-Rays eyed vs terror, diseases

ADELAIDE—They can see through clothing, plastic and packaging well enough to identify explosives, guns or even biological weapons instantly and accurately.

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Welcome to the cutting edge of radio and optical science, Tera-Hertz Rays, or T-Rays, discovered a century ago, but developed into a useable technology only within the last few years and about to be showcased by an international conference here this week.

Leading scientists from Australia, the United States, Europe and Asia will share the latest advances in the technology at the conference, sponsored by the Australian government's Defense Science and Technology Organization (DSTO) at Adelaide University on Thursday and Friday.

One of the principal speakers will be the acknowledged "father" of T-rays, professor Xi-Cheng Zhang of New York's Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, who has spent more than 20 years developing them.

Recognized as a difficult area of physics, T-Rays are described as emissions between infra-red and microwaves.

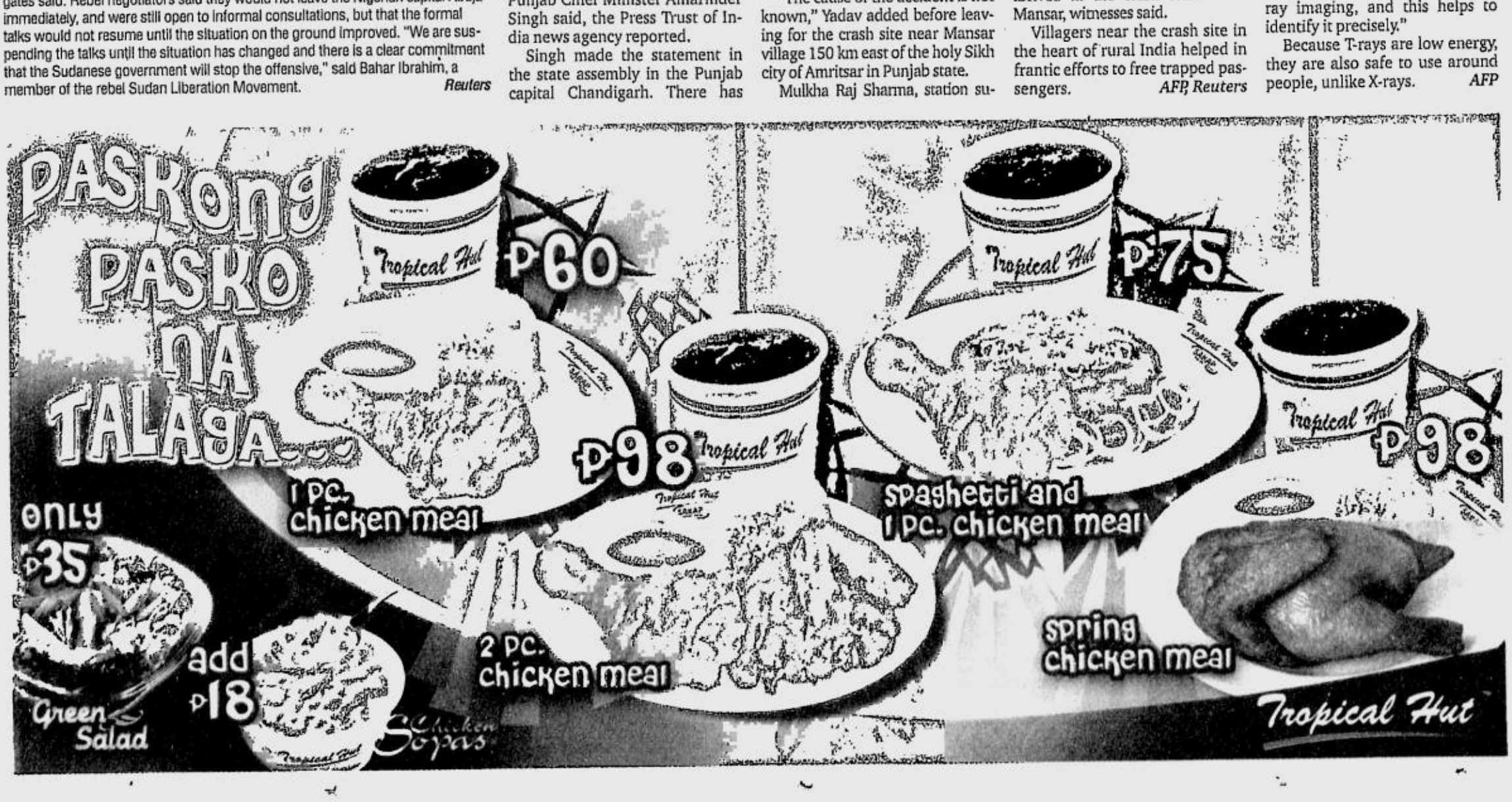
"Most molecules vibrate in the terahertz frequency, so if you can detect them with T-rays, you can get a very good 'fingerprint'" conference organizer, Adelaide University professor Derek Abbott said in a statement Tuesday.

"T-rays pass through things like food packaging, clothing, plastic and cardboard enabling us to analyze what's inside.

"This means they can be used to detect and identify weapons of metal or plastic, illicit drugs or biological hazards like anthrax, even if they were hermetically sealed.

"You can find out much more about the substance than you would with optical, infra-red or x-ray imaging, and this helps to identify it precisely."

Because T-rays are low energy, they are also safe to use around people, unlike X-rays. *AFP*



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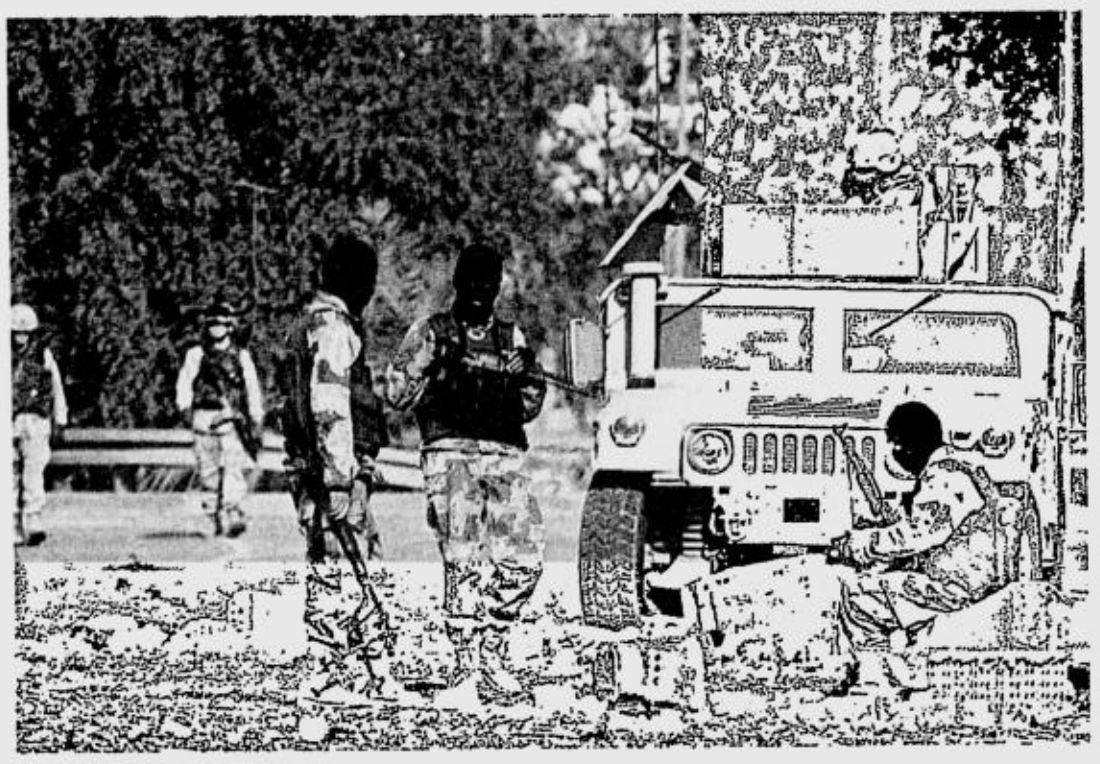
Such losses, the team said, could have a significant impact in many aspects of society.

For example birds pollinate many plant species and carry the seeds of others to new locations. *AP*



NEW ATTACK
Members of the Iraqi National Guard and US soldiers secure the site where a suicide car bomb exploded near an entrance to Baghdad's Green Zone on Tuesday. The blast occurred at a National Guard recruiting center near the entrance where another suicide bomb killed seven Iraqis the previous day. AFP

T-Rays eyed vs terror, diseases

ADELAIDE—They can see through clothing, plastic and packaging well enough to identify explosives, guns or even biological weapons instantly and accurately.

They have the potential to become a powerful new weapon in the fight against crime and the war on terror, they can also penetrate bad weather, dust or smoke better than infrared or visible systems, and they can even detect diseases like cancer.

Welcome to the cutting edge of radio and optical science, Tera-Hertz Rays, or T-Rays, discovered a century ago, but developed into a useable technology only within the last few years and about to be showcased by an international conference here this week.

Leading scientists from Australia, the United States, Europe and Asia will share the latest advances in the technology at the conference, sponsored by the Australian government's Defense Science and Technology Organization (DSTO) at Adelaide University on Thursday and Friday.

One of the principal speakers will be the acknowledged "father" of T-rays, professor Xi-Cheng Zhang of New York's Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, who has spent more than 20 years developing them.

Recognized as a difficult area of physics, T-Rays are described as emissions between infra-red and microwaves.

"Most molecules vibrate in the terahertz frequency, so if you can detect them with T-rays, you can get a very good 'fingerprint'" conference organizer, Adelaide University professor Derek Abbott said in a statement Tuesday.

"T-rays pass through things like food packaging, clothing, plastic and cardboard enabling us to analyze what's inside.

"This means they can be used to detect and identify weapons of metal or plastic, illicit drugs or biological hazards like anthrax, even if they were hermetically sealed.

"You can find out much more about the substance than you would with optical, infra-red or x-ray imaging, and this helps to identify it precisely."

Because T-rays are low energy, they are also safe to use around people, unlike X-rays. *AFP*

WorldBriefs

Car bomb kills 7 anew in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A suicide car bomber killed seven people when he struck a checkpoint at Baghdad's Green Zone early Tuesday, the second attack in two days at the district that houses Iraq's interim government and foreign embassies, officials said. Police Lt. Rafid Abid said the attack was carried out by a suicide bomber. Two Marines assigned to the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force were killed in action Monday "while conducting security and stabilization operations" in the vast Anbar province west of Baghdad, the military said Tuesday. *AP*

36 trapped in flooded China mine

BEIJING—Rescuers furiously pumped water Monday from a shaft at a flooded mine in southwest China where 36 workers are missing and feared dead as the country reels from another disaster in the danger-plagued industry. Water gushed into the Xujiaba Tianchi mine in Sinan county Sunday when 80 miners were in the shaft, Wu Ming, an official at the mine, said. Forty-four workers got out safely, but the others were unaccounted for, he said. "Right now we have five pumps working to evacuate the water, we still don't know how deep the water is," Wu said. "At this time it is hard to say if those in the mine have a chance to survive." So far no casualties have been reported. *AFP*

Taiwan president resigns from party

TAIPEI—Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian on Tuesday resigned as leader of the Democratic Progressive Party, taking the blame for last weekend's parliamentary election defeat. Chen stepped down at the first meeting of the party's Central Standing Committee since Saturday's legislative polls. "A-bian (Chen's nickname) here wants to voice my deep apology to the country's supporters," he read from a statement prepared in advance. And "in order to take full responsibility, I have tendered my resignation to the party's Central Standing Committee." Chen's popularity has fallen to a record low of 34 percent after the defeat of his pro-independence alliance in the elections, a survey released Monday said. *AFP*

Darfur rebels suspend peace talks

ABUJA—Darfur rebels suspended formal peace talks in Nigeria on Monday to put pressure on the government to halt an offensive in the vast desert region, delegates said. Rebel negotiators said they would not leave the Nigerian capital Abuja immediately, and were still open to informal consultations, but that the formal talks would not resume until the situation on the ground improved. "We are suspending the talks until the situation has changed and there is a clear commitment that the Sudanese government will stop the offensive," said Bahar Ibrahim, a member of the rebel Sudan Liberation Movement. *Reuters*

Top US officials warned vs AIDS drug

WASHINGTON—Weeks before President George W. Bush announced a plan to protect African babies from AIDS, top US health officials were warned that research on the key drug was flawed and may have underreported severe reactions including deaths, government documents show.

The 2002 warnings about the drug, nevirapine, were serious enough to suspend testing for more than a year, let Uganda's government know of the dangers and prompt the drug's maker to pull its request for permission to use the medicine to protect newborns in the United States.

But the National Institutes of Health, the government's premier health research agency, chose not to inform the White House as it scrambled to keep its experts' concerns from scuttling the use of nevirapine in Africa as a cheap solution, according to documents obtained by The Associated Press.

"Everyone recognized the enormity that this decision could have on the worldwide use of nevirapine to interrupt mother-baby transmission," NIH's AIDS research chief, Dr. Edmund C. Tramont, reported March 14, 2002, to his boss, Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

The documents show Tramont and other NIH officials dismissed the problems with the nevirapine research in Uganda as overblown and were slow to report safety concerns to the Food and Drug Administration.

Records for NIH's nevirapine research in Uganda were so sloppy that NIH investigators couldn't be sure which mothers got the drug. They had to use blood samples to confirm doses, the documents show.

Less than a month after Bush announced a $500 million plan to push nevirapine across Africa to slow the AIDS epidemic, the Health and Human Services Department sent a nine-page letter to Ugandan officials identifying violations of federal patient protection rules by NIH's research. Africa accounts for more than two-thirds of the world's AIDS cases, with 27 million infected.

The NIH research "may have represented a failure to minimize risk to the subjects," the Office of Human Research Protections told Ugandan authorities in summer 2002. *AP*

Indian train collision kills at least 50

NEW DELHI—Fifty people were killed and around 150 injured Tuesday when two passenger trains collided head-on in the northern Indian state of Punjab, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said, the Press Trust of India news agency reported.

Singh made the statement in the state assembly in the Punjab capital Chandigarh. There has been substantial damage to four bogies of the two trains, he added.

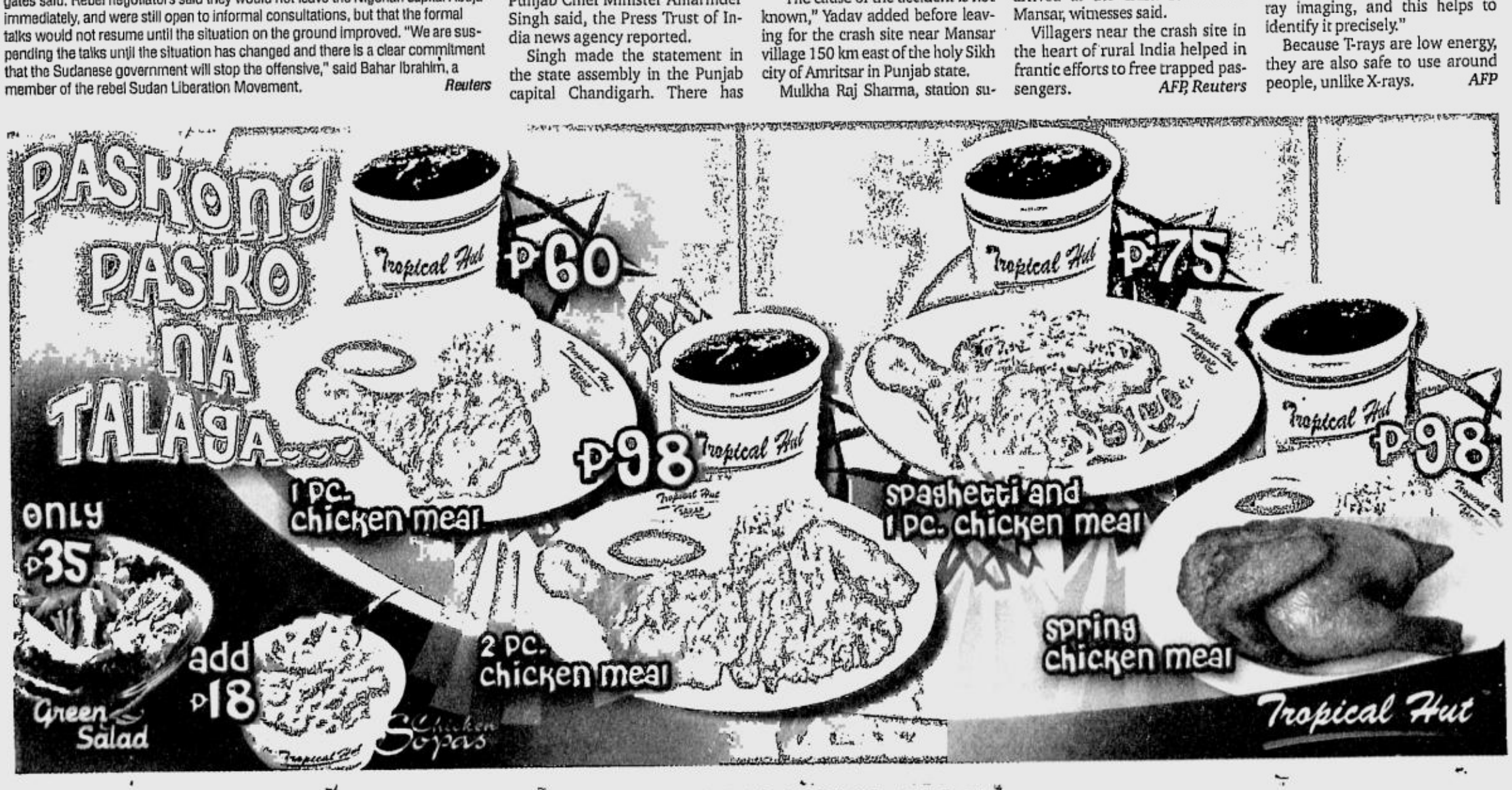
Indian news agencies and media reported that dozens had been hurt in the crash.

"The cause of the accident is not known," Yadav added before leaving for the crash site near Mansar village 150 km east of the holy Sikh city of Amritsar in Punjab state.

Mulkha Raj Sharma, station superintendent in the city of Jammu, the winter capital of Indian Kashmir, said the trains had collided head-on.

The Army was called out to help in the rescue efforts and cranes had arrived at the crash scene near Mansar, witnesses said.

Villagers near the crash site in the heart of rural India helped in frantic efforts to free trapped passengers. *AFP, Reuters*



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Pinochet indicted for murder

SANTIAGO—A Chilean judge on Monday indicted former dictator Augusto Pinochet to stand trial for murder and kidnappings carried out under his 1973-1990 iron-fisted rule, also placing him under house arrest.

However, in a dramatic day for Pinochet, 89, his lawyers late Monday won an appeals court suspension of the order placing him under house arrest while the charges against him are reviewed by the higher court.

Judge Juan Guzman Tapia had filed charges based on nine victims of "Operation Condor," a conspiracy of 1970s South American military dictatorships to kill their opponents and spirit away their bodies.

The case could place Pinochet in the dock for the first time for alleged human rights abuses conducted during his 17-year rule.

"It is hard to say with words what it was like to hear this indictment by a judge," said a visibly moved Viviana Diaz, head of Families of Missing Detainees, one of the main anti-Pinochet groups.

"I think a very important process has started in the search for justice and truth," said lawyer Julia Urquieta.

Pinochet's lawyer, Pablo Rodriguez, said Pinochet was too old to stand trial.

"This is an abuse of the most basic human rights of a person who is put on trial without being able to defend himself," Rodriguez said. *AFP*

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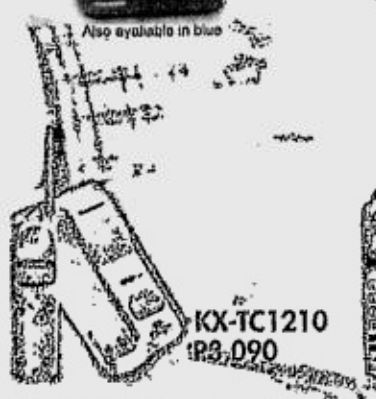
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OPINION

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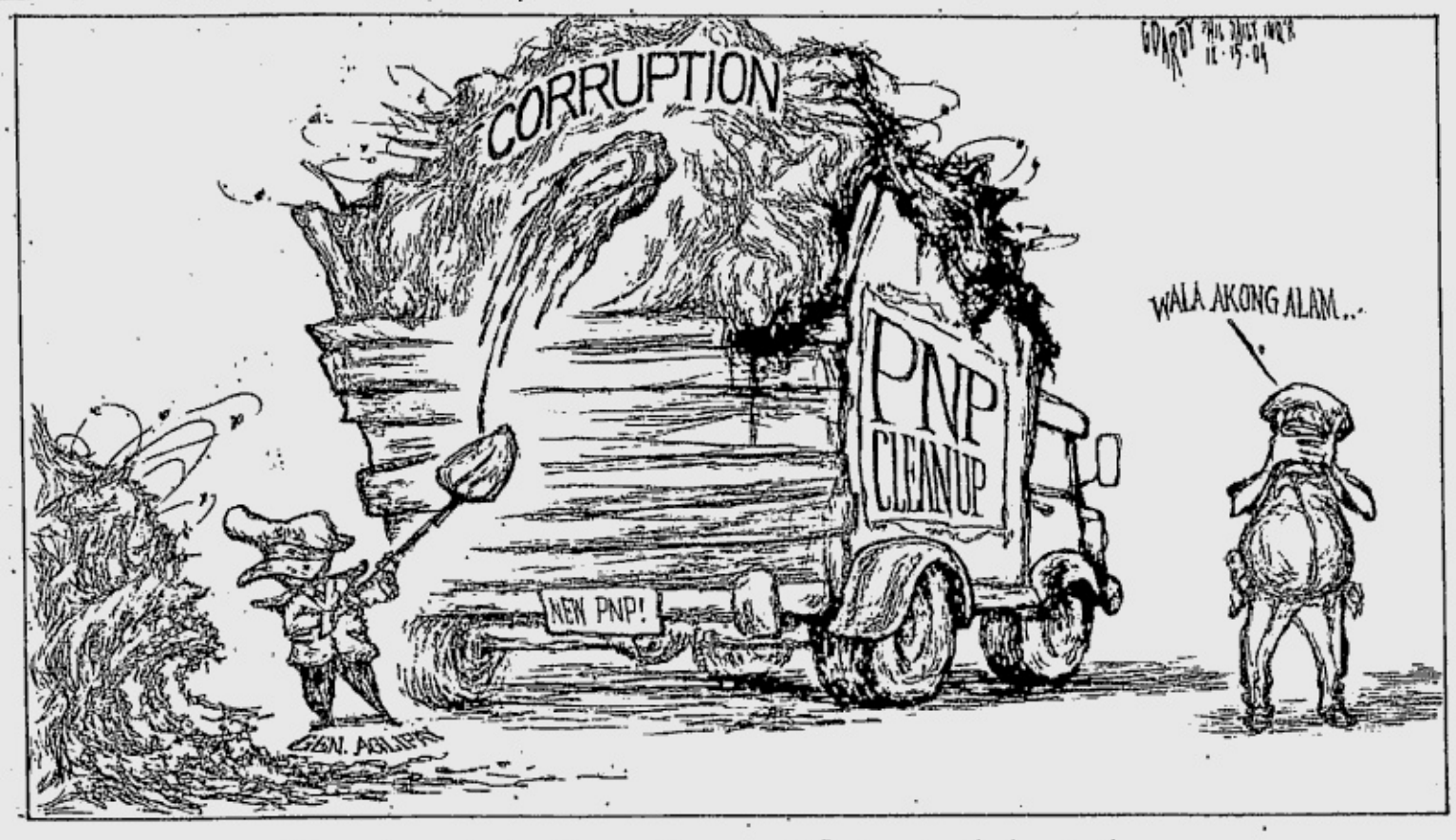

The quiet man

EDITORIAL

IN "MEASURE for Measure," there is this Shakespearean line: "Some rise by sin, and some by virtue fall."

Fernando Poe Jr. was, first and foremost, that rare example of a man, the self-made aristocrat. There is no other way to understand him than by comprehending the implications of this characterization. He was heir to a great name, a beloved one: his father was both a hero of the screen and a hero of the resistance to the Japanese invader. And yet, his father having died young, Ronnie Poe had to carve out for himself a life and career that would both honor his father and make up for the loss of income and support caused by his father's death.

In an industry whose glitz and glitter never quite outshine the ruthlessness, intrigue and self-indulgence that is its dark side, Poe honed his creative talent and used his great capacity for discipline to overcome and achieve. He mastered the rules, even breaking them when he had to, by defying producers and directors (and becoming one himself) in order to establish himself as a star no longer at the mercy of the industry. He molded the industry to his will, and forever changed it.

He had, on his side, an instinctive understanding of the requirements of his craft, fundamental among them, an appreciation of the thinking of his audience. He mastered the tricky combination of illusion, of establishing, and thereafter promoting a heroic figure on screen, while maintaining a kind of authenticity that merged what he saw as his own virtues with those his audience believed in, and wanted to see. He was generous, he was kind, he was helpful. He was also quiet and remote, a lone wolf that became a pack leader.

There was a near-mystical bond between not only his fans and himself, but between his fellow actors, producers, directors and technicians in the movie industry and himself. He was always grateful, in a society in which gratitude is a supremely important virtue. He was generous, in a society that demands generosity from achievers. He not only made, but maintained, lasting friendships. He was, within the forgiving bounds of his generation's attitudes, not only loyal to his wife, but gave her every courtesy and respect. He was also a genuinely loving foster father.

And yet in acquiring everything a self-made man would want, from wealth to professional prestige, to property and a respected family, he was autocratic and patriarchal in his professional and personal life. That is, he was not only acknowledged as king of Philippine cinema, but he was kingly in his behavior, as our society sees kingship: remote yet approachable, stern yet forgiving, commanding yet courtly, but always remembering and never failing to remind that he was boss. He had the common touch, but there was nothing common about his tastes, his habits, even his politics.

Because of his last, and unsuccessful, role as presidential contender, the reckoning of his life must necessarily include the political. He may have always viewed it with suspicion and contempt, but he definitely had specific ideas about it. He and his wife were loyal admirers of Ferdinand Marcos, who, rightly or wrongly, was viewed by many as the personification of a self-made aristocrat. Poe's own quest for the presidency was not merely motivated by loyalty to an old friend, Joseph Estrada, whom he loved but whose trust he never abused. It was spurred on by a self-made man's desire to provide the kind of leadership conservative, self-made men want, and miss: devoted to property; desirous of order and peace; hierarchical, patriarchal; a *datu* for the common man. *Malakas* for a weak society.

His fans grieve for Poe today. It is fair to say all Filipinos of a certain age see in his passing one more sign that the virtues of traditional Filipino society are receding even more firmly into the past. With the passing of a famous man, it is tempting to excuse his faults and pay tribute only to his virtues. The truth is, Poe was what Filipinos like to see: simple virtues tempered by occasional faults, the whole made marvelous by the imperfection of its parts. For in the end, both the private and public man were built on an appeal to every person's conviction that they can at least dream of being a hero.

Angara defends self, total log ban

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I BELIEVE there is a concerted effort to put down Sen. Edgardo Angara by his enemies, and the recent floods and landslides in his home province of Aurora and neighboring Quezon presented an opportunity to do that. Every day I receive text messages from unknown sources attacking Angara, blaming him for the tragedy that befell the two provinces because his family, so the messages said, is either into logging or coddling loggers. My media colleagues received similar messages.

Angara, who was the lone guest in last Monday's Kapihan sa Manila (Hotel), said he knew who his attackers were but declined, out of *delicadeza*, to name them. He denied being a logger or sponsoring any logging company. He admitted that he knew one of the logging concessionaires in Aurora but that was because they were fraternity brothers in the University of the Philippines. But he never sponsored nor coddled the logger, he said.

Neither did a priest say Angara was benefiting from the logging business nor did Ka Roger say that he was behind the logging operations in Aurora, he said. He related how the stories to that effect came out in the media.

He said the priest wrote him a letter denying the things attributed to him by the media. A reporter had asked the priest if he thought somebody was benefiting from the illegal logging operations in Aurora, and the priest's answer was, "It's possible."

This was interpreted in media that the Angara family, because it is the political kingpin in Aurora, was benefiting from the logging operations. As for Ka Roger, he said he only got his information from what that priest said.

That part of the misunderstanding has been clarified several times, but why do the text messages repeating the wrong accusations continue?

Angara told the Kapihan that 70 percent of Aurora and Quezon are still covered with forests. The landslides occurred in only one town in Aurora (Dingalan) and three in adjacent Quezon (Real, Infanta and Nakar). It was the extremely huge amount of rainfall that soaked the mountainsides and loosened the soil which triggered the floods and landslides. Many of those who perished had erected their houses on a dry riverbed. When torrents filled the river, the homes and the people sleeping in them were washed away.

Contrary to what the propaganda against him claims, Angara said, he is not a logger coddler. He is in favor of a total log ban. Records will show that during the two times that a total log ban was voted upon in the Senate, he voted for it. Had the House of Representatives not reject its own log ban bill, we would have had a total log ban now, he said. He would again vote for a total ban when a new bill comes along.

The opposition senator said he had not asked the administration for a Cabinet position. While admitting that he and President Macapagal-Arroyo indeed had a meeting, he denied accepting membership in her Cabinet. He said he would rather stay in the Senate. He wants to finish his third term and be the longest-serving senator.

* * *

Angara criticized government forest policies. Private tree plantations are good, he said, but placing them beside public forests is bad. The plantation owners illegally poach on the public forests so they have an income while waiting for their own trees to mature.

Another faulty forest policy is the so-called "community-based forest management," which leaves it to the community to manage the forest near it, on the theory that it knows best what to do with its forest. This has been proven disastrous in Real, Infanta, Nakar and Dingalan. Their residents admitted that they had illegally cut trees for lumber, for firewood and charcoal, and for selling to gardeners for landscaping purposes. That is their only means of livelihood, they said. But many of them and their neighbors lost their lives because of it. They should have known better but did not.

Even with a total log ban, the illegal cutting of trees will continue as long as there is a big demand for the forest products. Like I said in a previous column, the Philippine construction industry is very wasteful in the use of wood. A policy that would wean the industry away from wood should be put in place. Many other countries, like the United States, are already doing that, using substitutes that are cheaper and more durable in place of wood.

With the rising cost of liquefied petroleum gas, many people are going back to firewood even in the urban areas. And the hundreds of thousands of barbecue stands and *ihaw-ihaw* restaurants all over the country have created a big demand for charcoal.

All these demands can be satisfied without denuding our forests, however. In the first place, we will earn more money if we preserve our forests rather than cut them. Because of dwindling wild places in the world, tourists troop to countries that still have them.

The provinces of Quezon and Aurora, although named after the first president of the Philippine Commonwealth and his first lady, are among the most undeveloped in the country because of their remoteness. But they are also among the most beautiful, with a narrow plain sandwiched between the Sierra Madre Mountains and wide sand beaches and the sea. There are many waterfalls and lakes in the mountains and islets and magnificent coral reefs in the blue sea. These are what tourists are looking for, since there are pitifully few of them left in the world. Instead of cutting the forests for livelihood, the residents will get jobs from tourists attracted by the standing forests.

(To be continued)

Secrets

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

LEE Hsien Loong, Lee Kuan Yew's son and the incumbent prime minister of Singapore; had some interesting things to say to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Diosdado Macapagal's daughter and incumbent President of the Philippines, when he visited here last week. The secret of Singapore's success, he said, was three things: clean government, good pay for civil servants and the certainty of retribution for erring officials and employees.

True. Clean government is essential to progress. Example is the best teacher, something Lee Kuan Yew, however you disagree with his methods, has proven by his own conduct. There is no problem with a strict disciplinarian who punishes infractions severely, but there is a problem with a strict disciplinarian who does so while being personally given to the commission of the cardinal sins rather than the cardinal virtues. You can accuse Lee Kuan Yew of many things, but you cannot accuse him of ripping off his country.

There is no problem with a president vowing to punish wrongdoers harshly. But there is a problem with a President doing that who has vowed she would not run again on the ground she would only foment disunity if she does, who has bankrupted the treasury to campaign, who has borrowed more than two presidents combined and has only widespread hunger and the specter of an economic collapse to show for it. Example gives the fiercest lesson of all. A leader lies, cheats and steals, the citizens will lie, cheat and steal.

Civil servants do deserve better pay. But they may also not exist plentifully. I've been saying that about the police, the military and the civilian bureaucracy for a long time. They are bloated, they are a refuge for the corrupt and incompetent. We reduce their size to a tenth of what they are, and overnight we will experience a vast improvement in peace and order and efficiency in the delivery of services. At the very least, because there will be fewer bank robbers, murderers and crooks running around in khaki and barong Tagalog.

Then pay the remaining cops, soldiers and bureaucrats good wages. But only as a matter of justice, not as a matter of stopping corruption. No level of pay will stop corruption—greed is bottomless. Only a culture of honesty will, one that rewards good and punishes evil.

Which brings us to Lee's last point. In this country, every time a monumental iniquity happens, the universal call is to mete out the death penalty to the criminals. Well, the death penalty, or any penalty, including torture, won't mean anything if the criminals are not caught. Only recently, government officials have been shouting death to the "illegal loggers." In fact, it is not the "illegal loggers" who have wrought the deaths in Quezon, it is the legal ones. It was not the logs of the *kaingeros* and the Dumagats that tumbled on the folk that lived at the foot of the mountain, it was the logs of the legal loggers.

Erap's trial has become a travesty. All it says is not that the crooked will be punished but that the clown will be caught. It does not warn public officials to be honest, it warns them to b[illegible]eful.

Lee's comments are worth taking seriously. But I myself have always thought they were derivative problems in our context. Our not having a clean government, our not paying officials right, and our not punishing wrongdoers themselves owe to deeper problems, whose solutions Singapore also points to.

The first of these problems is a lack of sense of country. I've talked about this repeatedly. Corruption does happen in other countries. Indonesia has the dubious honor of having had a leader, Suharto, who topped Transparency International's list of most corrupt tyrants in the world (Marcos was only second). We keep envying Singapore for its ironfisted rule. Well, Thailand too has progressed by leaps and bounds and it isn't ruled by an iron fist. What Singapore and Thailand simply have in common are people who would not dream of being citizens of a country other than Singapore and Thailand.

The second I've also talked about repeatedly. Corruption riots because we do not have a sense of taxpayers' money. The money we give in taxes we regard as tribute or *balato*, something we part with grudgingly, never expecting them to come back in roads, bridges and services. We rough up pickpockets in the streets because we regard what they do as stealing. We don't do the same thing to public officials because we regard what they do as ROI, a return on (campaign) investment.

And finally, a sense of pride. Over the past several months, I've gotten a lot of irate mail from Filipinos demanding to know what I've got against nurses and caregivers. It's perfectly respectable work, why do I keep putting it down? My answer to this is that I'm not. I'm not putting down nurses and caregivers, I'm putting down the attitude that we can only be a nation of nurses and caregivers. An attitude to be found in our doctors agreeing to become so abroad, and in our educational system which is being geared to produce an army of nurses and caregivers. We used to be second only to Japan in economic potential in the 1950s. Have we fallen so low?

Contrast that with the attitude of Singaporeans that says anything you can do, I can do better. You may find that attitude a little arrogant but it's the kind of attitude that makes Singapore Airlines one of the best in the world, and that makes airline personnel chase after you when you've left something at the airport. I personally experienced the latter, while in a state of utter absentmindedness, and this wasn't after 9/11 either. They take pride in honesty. You do not become world-class by having the mentality of a parochial. You do not join the guests at the table by having the mentality of a servant.

Some secrets are not really that hard to fathom.

Politics of poison

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

UKRANIAN opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko has returned to Kiev, battling for his life and to win the rerun on Dec. 26 of the rigged Nov. 21 run-off presidential election.

Yushchenko arrived from Vienna with his once handsome face disfigured by lesions and scars after Viennese doctors confirmed he had been a victim of dioxin poisoning. Doctors at Rudolfinerhaus clinic said tests showed his blood had 1,000 more times the normal level of dioxin.

He has accused Ukranian authorities of poisoning him and said that he was "happy to be alive." The results of the medical tests have introduced another explosive element to the new round of election as the Ukrainian prosecutor-general launched a criminal investigation into an incident evocative of Cold War espionage tactics.

The incident reminds us of the murky history of poison as a weapon to get rid of inconvenient persons and political rivals, including Napoleon under British captivity in St. Helena.

Death from poisoning is the stuff of conspiracy theories, and the case of Yushchenko suggests involvement of Ukrainian intelligence services, reportedly with links to the KGB which has been suspected of being behind the mysterious death of the Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin.

Viennese doctors were unable to say whether it was the result of a deliberate act and left it to specialists and criminal investigators to determine responsibility. They have, however, said Yushchenko would have no long-term functional damage and was "fully capable of working," meaning he has not been disabled and can go back to the election campaign.

The tests have gained political sympathy for Yushchenko instead of causing doubts about whether he is healthy enough to run the country. Opinion polls have Yushchenko leading incumbent Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, who is backed by President Vladimir Putin of Russia, by 46 percent to 39 percent. The Ukrainian Supreme Court has ordered a rerun on Dec. 26 of the disputed November run-off election after voiding its results, which had Yanukovich as the winner, on grounds of fraud.

The Supreme Court's decision broke three weeks of political stand-off, during which supporters of Yushchenko staged a massive people power-style "orange revolution" by blockading government buildings in Kiev that pushed the country to the brink of a civil war.

Doctors have told Yushchenko he can return to the campaign trail, but it may be years before he returns to normal. But there's a political dynamite in the criminal investigation that could involve Ukrainian intelligence services and the regime of President Leonid Kuchma in the poisoning.

Yushchenko fell ill in September after a late dinner at the home of Volodymer Sasysuk, first deputy chair of SBU, Ukraine's intelligence service. Other senior security officials were present at the dinner, including SBU chief Thor Smeshko. Yushchenko began suffering agonizing abdominal pains soon after the dinner.

Kateryna Yushchenko, wife of the opposition leader, has said in an interview that she tasted poison on his lips as they kissed the night he fell ill.

"I thought there was something different about my husband when he came home that night," she said, "because he has never taken any medicine, he's a very healthy man. I tasted some medicine on his breath, on his lips. And I asked him about it. He brushed it away, saying there is nothing."

The next day he checked into a private clinic and became very ill. He was taken to a hospital in Vienna. After treatment, his internal swelling and ulcers began to recede but he developed back pain so severe that a morphine drop was fitted into his spine.

The Kuchma government, which had prematurely declared Yanukovich the winner in the November run-off election, scornfully dismissed the notion of poisoning. It said the unsightly purple swelling was the result of Yushchenko's "eating bad sushi" and drinking, too.

According to Agence France Presse research, dioxin is a term referring to a group of substances created as by-products from factories that use chlorine, such as pesticide, paper or plastic plants. Incinerator fumes also contain dioxins.

"They are widespread in developed nations, and low doses have accumulated in the bodies of most people in the industrialized world," the news agency reported. "But some dioxins are highly toxic. TCDD, for example, is one of the agents thought to have caused long-term problems for Vietnam veterans exposed to the Agent Orange herbicide."

Massive quantities of dioxin can cause a type of adult acne called chlorache, which can take up to three years to heal.

Poisoning has been associated with the KGB as a favored method of carrying out assassinations. In 1978, the London-based Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov died after someone thrust a ferrule of an umbrella into his leg, depositing a tiny capsule containing a lethal amount of ricin.

In ancient times, there were celebrated cases of poisoning. One such case is told by Suetonious, the Roman historian, who wrote on the poisoning attempt on Emperor Claudius by his wife Agrippina.

"Agrippina did (it) herself at a family banquet, poisoning a dish of mushrooms, his favorite food," said Suetonious. But the mushrooms did not achieve the intended effect. The poison used apparently was another species of mushroom.

According to Robert Graves, the translator of Suetonious, Claudius vomited up the mushrooms, negating the effect. He was then poisoned a second time, using the juice of a "Palestinian wild-ground," which was administered orally and as an enema, leaving the observation that "it must have been a truly horrible way to go."

Nurturing trees, nurturing democracy

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THE NOBEL Peace Prize has usually been associated with people helping to resolve armed conflicts (for example, the United Nations' Kofi Annan) or those who provide assistance to victims of these conflicts (Medecins sans Frontieres or Doctors Without Borders). This year it was different. The Peace Prize was awarded to a Kenyan environmental activist, Wangari Maathai, known for her Green Belt Movement which has resulted in the planting of 30 million trees in several African countries.

People will ask, as I did: What does tree planting have to do with peace?

It's a question we should be asking ourselves in the Philippines, as we continue to reel from the destruction caused by flooding in deforested areas.

Biologist, veterinarian, activist

From her biography posted in the Nobel Prize website, we learn she obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees in biological sciences from the United States and went on to obtain a Ph.D. in veterinary medicine at the University of Nairobi, making her the first woman in East and Central Africa to have a doctorate. Maathai taught veterinary anatomy at the University of Nairobi for several years.

In 1977, as a member of the National Council of Women of Kenya, she introduced the idea of women's groups planting trees to improve their quality of life. This led to the formation of the Green Belt Movement, which has since spread to other African countries. The movement uses tree planting as an entry point for community development, and has since spun off many other activities, including eco-safaris, where foreign tourists come in as volunteers to help plant trees.

Maathai combined her environmentalism with political activism, opposing the autocratic Kenyan President Daniel Arap Moi and even running against him in the presidential elections in 1997. Her opposition to the Moi regime was based in part on his anti-environmental policies. Maathai was imprisoned several times for her opposition to the government, and was hospitalized once after being beaten up in a rally.

The Moi government was voted out of power in 2002. During those elections, Maathai won a seat in parliament and has since been appointed assistant minister for environment, natural resources and wildlife.

A women's movement

Maathai began her Nobel Peace lecture by referring to the fact that she was the first African woman to receive the prize, and that, in accepting it, she was particularly mindful of the situation of women and the girl child. She started the Green Belt Movement mainly as a response "to needs identified by rural women, namely lack of firewood, clean drinking water, balanced diets, shelter and income." Because women are the primary caretakers for families and the land, they are the first to become aware of environmental damage, with tree planting being "a natural choice."

Maathai was able to mobilize women to plant trees not just for environmental conservation but for very practical purposes, including income generation, the tree seedlings eventually being sold to nurseries. There are lessons here for Filipinos. We still see tree planting as a token gesture done on Environment Day rather than as a vital tool for survival.

Maathai gives new meanings to tree planting, describing it as concrete action taken to change one's situation. It is, she says, "an act from where you can make a difference."

Once women discovered they had the power to act, the Green Belt meetings became forums to tackle other social issues, from violence within their households to government corruption to unfair international trade agreements that affected the farmers' livelihoods.

In her Nobel lecture, Maathai was emphatic about the relationship between democracy and environmental conservation: "...responsible governance of the environment was impossible without democratic space."

We Filipinos should remember that the plunder of our forests was most intense during the Marcos dictatorship, as concessions were parceled out to his cronies. By the time democracy was restored in 1986, our forests had practically been wiped out. Since then, even with formal democratic institutions restored, political warlords and dynasties have continued to control the country, using their power to destroy what's left of the forests while moving on to pillage the rest of the environment.

In a BBC special, Maathai described how the tree became a symbol for democratic struggle in Kenya. In 1989, the Kenyan government fenced off part of Nairobi's Uhuru (Freedom) Park, where one of Moi's business cronies wanted to build a 60-story building. Maathai joined other Kenyans to protest, and eventually the government backed off. Maathai says that the day authorities removed the fence around the park was "the beginning of the end of the dictatorship."

Through the years, Nairobi's Uhuru Park continued to be the focus of political action, Kenyans planting trees to demand the release of political prisoners and for a transition to democracy. In the BBC special, Maathai used this powerful metaphor: nurturing the trees is like nurturing the seeds for democracy.

And peace?

Maathai said trees were planted during the anti-dictatorship struggle in Kenya as part of a call for peaceful transition to democracy. Eventually, tree planting was also used for conflict resolution, especially during ethnic conflicts in Kenya. These "peace trees" actually drew from traditional practices: for example, the elders of the Kikuyu tribe would carry a staff from the thigi tree and place this between two disputing sides to stop fighting and get reconciliation talks going.

Reading that part of Maathai's Nobel lecture, I thought of our own situation, of the conflicts in Mindanao, for example, that erupt from the competition for scarce land and resources. I thought, too, of our own situation in urban areas, where we continue to use up our rapidly dwindling green spaces, depriving young Filipinos of potential parks and recreation areas. In such a situation, should it be surprising that young people turn to a violent culture of fraternities and drugs?

Maathai links the environment to democracy and peace. "Indeed, the state of any country's environment is a reflection of the kind of governance in place, and without good governance there can be no peace," she says. "Many countries, which have poor governance systems, are also likely to have conflicts and poor laws protecting the environment."

We need to ask ourselves: If we are indeed a democracy, why do we suffer so much from environmental degradation, together with all the problems resulting from the loss of natural resources, from deadly floods to hungry severely malnourished children?

Is there a way out of this quagmire? Maathai would point us to the trees, and the communities mobilized for tree planting, for the answers.

The man who would be king

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

HE was and will forever be known as "Da King," but Fernando Poe Jr. could have really been "king" in these parts, where the president commands extraordinary powers way beyond even the scope of the political office, as the exploits of his "best friend" Erap would prove.

He was "the man who would be king," the man who sought to turn the place he had earned in the hearts of the Filipino people, especially the movie-going public, into political capital. Or perhaps a better way of putting it would be that he was a man whose image and persona others had sought to mine for political gain. Up till the day he announced his candidacy, most everybody believed that FPJ had neither the heart nor the stomach for politics. And he would show this distaste for the nitty-gritty of partisan contests during the heated campaign, when he refused to meet with the media until his reticence began to take a toll on his poll numbers, and when he allowed his temper to get the better of him, most famously with a TV reporter.

By most accounts a regular nice guy, the only one in the crowded retinue of Joseph Estrada, it is said, who refused to exploit his closeness to the new President or even accept a justly-deserved reward, Poe would see his carefully guarded image tarnished in the course of his campaign. Intensely private, and protected from prying eyes by the entire movie industry and a compliant and adoring entertainment press, FPJ would see his most intimate secrets bared wide open, his family history and even the circumstances of his birth scrutinized and speculated on. He would be lampooned by those scornful of his lack of academic preparation, vilified by those who predicted doom for this country if ever he would win.

If anyone ever needed an object lesson on the perils of politics for the neophyte, Poe's electoral experience provides a sterling example.

* * *

IT was his wife Susan Roces who best articulated the sacrifice that Poe's political advisers were asking of him.

They could have both just faded into a comfortable retirement, she told the media soon after that tumultuous announcement of his candidacy at the Manila Hotel. They could have both retreated into private life and enjoyed the fruits of decades of hard work and courting the fickle public. Instead, at a time of well-deserved respite from their labors, Poe, as well as his wife, would be drawn into an arena that was alien to them and would call on all their energies, resources and fortitude.

True, they had both been public figures for most of their adult lives. True, they were not exactly political virgins, since FPJ had been embroiled in the campaigns of Erap from mayor to senator to vice president and then president. But always, his role was that of loyal supporter and staunch friend. Now, as his career was fading and after many years of service to an industry and profession he loved and that loved him back, he was putting his life and reputation on the line, chasing after the highest office of the land.

* * *

IT doesn't take a medical degree to see the links between his failed run for the presidency and the resulting frustration and perhaps depression, and his stroke some days back. He may not have felt the physical signs, and might even have been in denial about the blow to his ego, but the stress of the campaign and then the contentious counting as well as the ongoing electoral protest would have surely taken its toll.

It's really sad that a man who was looking forward to a life of ease and comfort had to forsake that to heed the call of politics. Whose call was it? Was his candidacy the result of a blinding revelation or an inspiration? Or was it merely an accommodation to vindicate a lifelong friend?

Close friends of FPJ say he decided to cast his lot with the opposition after the "FPJ for President Movement" held its first rally, filling up the Cuneta Astrodome with avid supporters who did not need to be paid to show up, paying for their own transportation and toting their own packed meals. He was moved by this show of support, and felt he could not disappoint the thousands who had shown, in the most concrete way, their commitment to his cause.

With his death, the legions of FPJ's followers would surely have only cemented their loyalty, admiration and love for this icon of Philippine cinema.

And with his death, Poe himself has assured his immortality. If he had lived on to a gracious old age, he would not live as long in the nation's memory as he would today, dying all of a sudden, while the memory of his candidacy was still fresh, and his cinematic legend had yet to be enshrined.

* * *

STILL, spare his family. Spare his widow, the still lovely and gracious Susan Roces, the slimy back-splash of partisan opportunism.

I would not blame her for feeling that it was precisely her husband's entry into politics that caused his death. It seems the height of insensitivity, then, to even suggest that she take up the fallen banner of her husband. In the first place, it's said that it was Susan who most firmly stood in her husband's way when the politicos were ganging up on him and holding out the temptation of becoming president. In the second, now is the time for grieving and for remembering and celebrating the memory of the man. Don't tarnish that memory by bringing politics into the picture when it is absolutely uncalled for.

If fate is merciful, what Filipinos will remember of Fernando Poe Jr. will be the actor, director and film icon—not the tragic politician. They will remember him as Ang Panday, the man who embodied in his carefully nurtured image and body of work the underdog who bears his suffering stoically but prevails in the end. The man who was—is—the Filipino for all Filipinos.

Prayers for the Revolution

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

CHRISTMAS traffic is upon us again. Our yearly experience of being stuck on the road near malls and commercial centers is enough to dilute the spirit of giving (and buying, of course) generated by lights, décor and Christmas carols playing on public address systems.

There is something about the season that makes us forget, at least momentarily, the pressures of everyday life. In recent days, my students seem to be far away, lost in thought, not about the past and history but about Christmas parties past and future. One wonders if people felt this way at Christmas during the Philippine Revolution, the Filipino-American War, or even World War II. Soldiers may have no occasion for shopping, but usually a ceasefire is called on Dec. 25 so that the battle weary can rest and think of peace. Why we cannot hold on to this wonderful spirit indefinitely is the challenge that has faced man for a long time.

One man who had a miserable Christmas in 1896 was Jose Rizal who was locked up in Fort Santiago and brought out only to face a military court on charges of treason. Rizal left us with a lot of letters and he seems to have forgotten to describe his last Christmas. He was not allowed to see his family, except for his mother and sisters. His father and elder brother Paciano were not allowed to see him; the only males allowed into the cell were toddlers. Rizal left us with a lot of documentation for various parts of his life but is silent about Christmas 1896, knowing that he faced a death sentence as soon as the trial was concluded.

In this silence, we have room to imagine how he filled his time. Sleeping or perhaps scribbling his "Ultimo Adios"? A historian studying this period in Rizal's life often wishes that some sort of document was left, but then having nothing and being forced to imagine can be better.

There is a lot of documentation on the Philippine Revolution that remains to be looked into and evaluated, but in the great mass that is now in the National Library, the Philippine Revolutionary Records or PRR (formerly the Philippine Insurgent Records or PIR) will tell us how Christmas was celebrated during the Revolution. All it needs is a historian who is looking specifically for documents on the topic.

The Jesuit historians, Pedro de Achutegui and Miguel Bernad, have compiled an interesting mix of documents on Aguinaldo and the Revolution of 1896 (Ateneo de Manila, 1972) that give us a sense of the times. I refer to two letters that ask for prayers. The first one is dated Nov. 16, 1896 and is originally in Tagalog. The text reads:

"In gratitude to the help extended to our Katipunan by the Blessed Mother of God, whose perpetual succor we have felt in trying to achieve our Liberty, please command your Brothers of the Katipunan under your jurisdiction to tell the townspeople to recite the Holy Rosary at all hours. Ask them to implore the help of the Holy Mother and of her Child to redeem us from the bondage of slavery and to take us under the mantle of grace. For three consecutive nights, ask the Brothers under your jurisdiction to pray that the enemy may abandon their contemptible conduct and that they face God and the mercy of heaven. Thus, the freedom which we have been able to hold so far may be ours forever.

"Please try to fulfill the order I gave last week with regard to the reenforcement of the camps and inform us of its compliance."

Praying the rosary for three consecutive nights in the hopes of a military victory is quite significant because the Spaniards surely prayed just as hard for a different outcome. Not knowing God as well as some people today, I wonder how He settled the issue.

The other document is signed by Baldomero Aguinaldo and is dated Jan. 14, 1897. He ordered the following:

"To the Military Commanders and Presidents of the towns mentioned in the margin [these are Mabilis, Magdalo, Gargano, Haligui, Magpuri, Sumilang, Mapagibig, Alapaap, Matalilong and Taliba]:

"According to a message sent here by a countryman of ours who is reliable and sympathetic to our cause, the enemy will attack our towns on the 24th of this month. However, we should be on guard even in the intervening days, and prepare all ways and means for our defense.

"Please order the people, especially the women, to make novenas. Ask those in charge of the barrios to be strict in carrying out this order, because we must understand that our prayers to Almighty God are really powerful weapons against our enemies."

In previous columns, I have written about various feasts and parties that Aguinaldo attended even when he was being pursued up north from Malolos by the Americans. Even in times for great difficulty, the Filipino found time to relax and to party. They also found a time to pray, a time to fight, a time to retreat.

There are documents on the music that was played, the food that was served and enjoyed. Trivial, of course, in the wider context of the struggle for independence but important to our understanding of how the Revolution was fought. Surely, there are more documents asking for prayers as there are instructions to soldiers on how to fight. When all of these are unearthed and studied, only then will we get a complete picture of the Revolution.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

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Ideal choices for important gov't posts

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's revamp of the Department of National Defense should be replicated in other departments and other vital government agencies in order to inject a fresh outlook and a new perspective in governance. Desperate times require bold decisions; it demands "thinking out of the box."

The conventional mode of recruiting Cabinet members exclusively from within the presidential inner circle should be discarded. A wider recruitment net is needed to reenergize and reinvigorate the bureaucracy.

For a start it may be a good idea to appoint Haydee Yorac, chair of the Presidential Commission on Good Government and a Ramon Magsaysay awardee, to the Bureau of Customs, both as a symbolic gesture and a powerful signal to corrupt elements that it won't be business as usual. This would be one last big fight for Yorac before she finally decides to bow out of public service. At the PCGG, former Sen. Wigberto Tañada would be an ideal choice. He would bring to the commission the same moral integrity and competence that Yorac possesses.

At the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo, also a Ramon Magsayay awardee, would be a good choice. Young, brilliant and a multi-awarded local government executive, Robredo should be given a chance to shine in the national stage. Interior Secretary-designate Angelo Reyes is too controversial a figure and has become a constant target of attacks from opposition politicians.

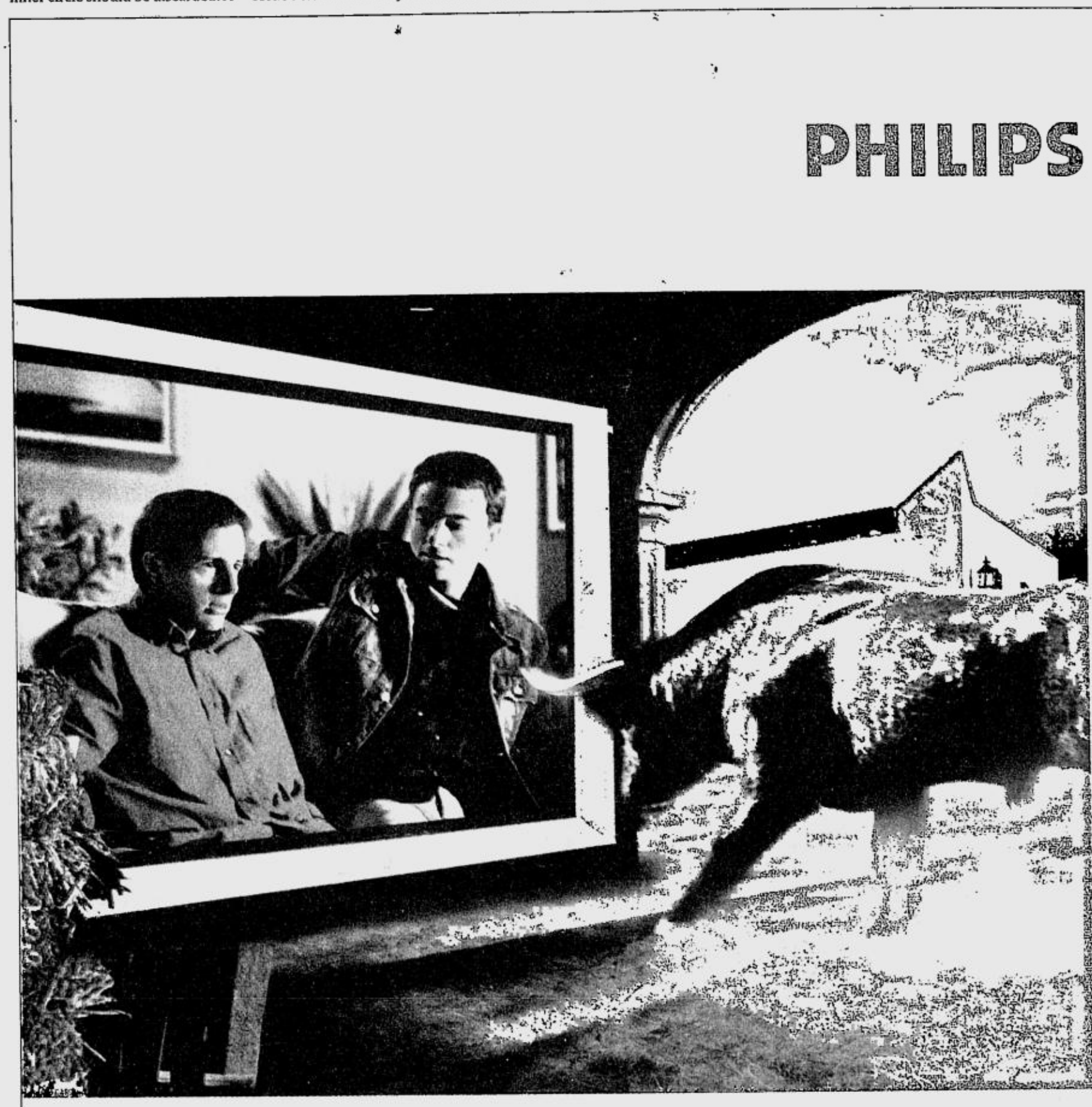
Bukidnon Rep. JR Nereus Acosta is another young and emerging political leader and the only Ph.D. holder in the House of Representatives. He was recently a recipient of the Yale University World Fellows Program. His academic and professional qualifications seem underutilized in the lower chamber. A Cabinet portfolio would certainly make full use of his academic credentials and legislative experience. He is the principal author of the Clean Air Act.

The recruitment of retired Ayala executive Francisco Licuanan into government service is a welcome development. The administration should bring in from the private sector more people of Licuanan's caliber, reputation and expertise.

It is to the administration's advantage to undertake a wide-ranging revamp in the executive branch, if only to bring back the public's confidence in the Arroyo administration's capacity to get the job done.

—FERDIE T. SIBAL,
18 Green Leaves St.,
Capitol Green Village,
Tandang Sora, Quezon City

LETTERS



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PLASMA PLEASURES

Exhibits and Roadshows	Duration	Venue
Ambassador Appliances	Nov. 12 - Dec. 19	Shangri-La Mall, EDSA, Mandaluyong City
Abenson Imus Exhibit	Nov. 19 - Dec. 18	Robinsons Imus, Imus, Cavite City
Abenson Libis Exhibit	Nov. 20 - Dec. 19	Robinsons Galleria-Eastwing, Ortigas Complex, Pasig City
Automatic Plasma Pleasures Exhibit	Dec. 13 - Dec. 26	Activity Center, Alabang Town Center, Muntinlupa City
Flat & Slim Roadshow Edsa Shangri-La Mall	Dec. 17 - Dec. 19	Metrolink Area, EDSA Shangri-La Mall, Mandaluyong City
Flat & Slim Roadshow Glorietta 3	Jan. 26 - Jan. 30	Makati Mall Cupola, Lower Level between Marks & Spencer and Cinderella

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Two mysterious deaths of military officers

WITH MAJ. Gen. Carlos Garcia on trial for irregularities he allegedly committed when he was the comptroller of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the authorities might as well investigate the killing of Commodore Nestor G. Fernando and Lt. Phillip Pestaño, naval officers and graduates of the Philippine Military Academy. The two were killed reportedly for exposing AFP irregularities.

Fernando was killed inside his office at the Joint Command and Staff College, Camp Aguinaldo, while investigating a multimillion-peso project scam. Pestaño was found dead inside his cabin in a naval ship to which he was assigned. At the time of his death, he was said to be set on exposing an illegal logging activity by some senior officers. To add insult to injury, the deputy commandant involved in the JCSC scam was promoted to brigadier general of the Philippine Air Force.

Fernando and Pestaño were just two of the many AFP officers killed for being idealistic and dedicated to their duty.

The Garcia case has shown that the Magdalo boys had all the reasons to rebel. Instead of being commended for their act, which the government labeled as "adventurism" and "mutiny," they were jailed. Who else would dare come up to expose wrongdoings in the AFP and the Philippine National Police?

I challenge President Macapagal-Arroyo: if she wants to restore the people's trust in the AFP, PNP and the government, she should address this problem once and for all by ordering a full-dress, no-holds-barred and impartial investigation. *Tigilan na niya ang pagpapa-cute. Di maganda tingnan* (She should stop trying to look cute. It's not good to see).

I hope the President would realize how serious the problem we are facing is before it is too late.

—EFREN G. FERNANDO,
Davao City

Welcome move

THE PLAN to space the billboards along the soon-to-be-completed North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) at equal intervals as mentioned by Al Mendoza in his column "Full Tank" (PDI, 11/17/04), would make a welcome sight to motorists passing by this busy highway.

The present billboards dotting our major thoroughfares, especially in urban areas like Metro Manila, mar the beauty of our environs.

The huge metal frames along the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) are a classic example that shows how advertising billboards uglify our verdant fields in the countryside even as they pose dangers to motorists and pedestrians alike.

Our lawmakers should enact a law that, once and for all, prohibits the indiscriminate proliferation of billboards in every nook and cranny of our towns and cities.

Advertisers should be properly guided with rules and regulations on the actual size and location of such advertising billboards.

Only then can we make traveling aesthetically enjoyable, especially in our expressways.

—PEDRO REFUERZO JR.,
6737 Taylo St.,
Makati City

Tanong ng Bayan

INQ INQ TV

ABC Tuwing Huwebes, 10:00pm

I-text ang inyong "fearless view" sa 2910. Pipiliin namin ang pinakamagaling na sagot. Ang premyo linggo-linggo: isang 21" color TV set!

I-type: INQTV <ang inyong sagot>, <buong pangalan>, <siyudad o probinsiya>, tapos ipadala sa 2910. Cut-off time: WEDNESDAY, 6 PM. Winner will be identified during the InqTV program: Thursday, 10.00pm, on ABC.

text 2910

Buwis sa yosi at alak, dapat bang taasan?

Narito ang ilan sa mga sagot ninyo. Text na!

"pg-isipan muna maige itol bka kc mtulad sa kwento ng gansang nangingitlog ng ginto, na pinatay sa pg hahangad na mkaraml kuno."
Edgardo Malayang, Makati

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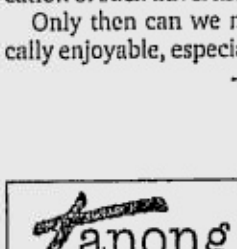

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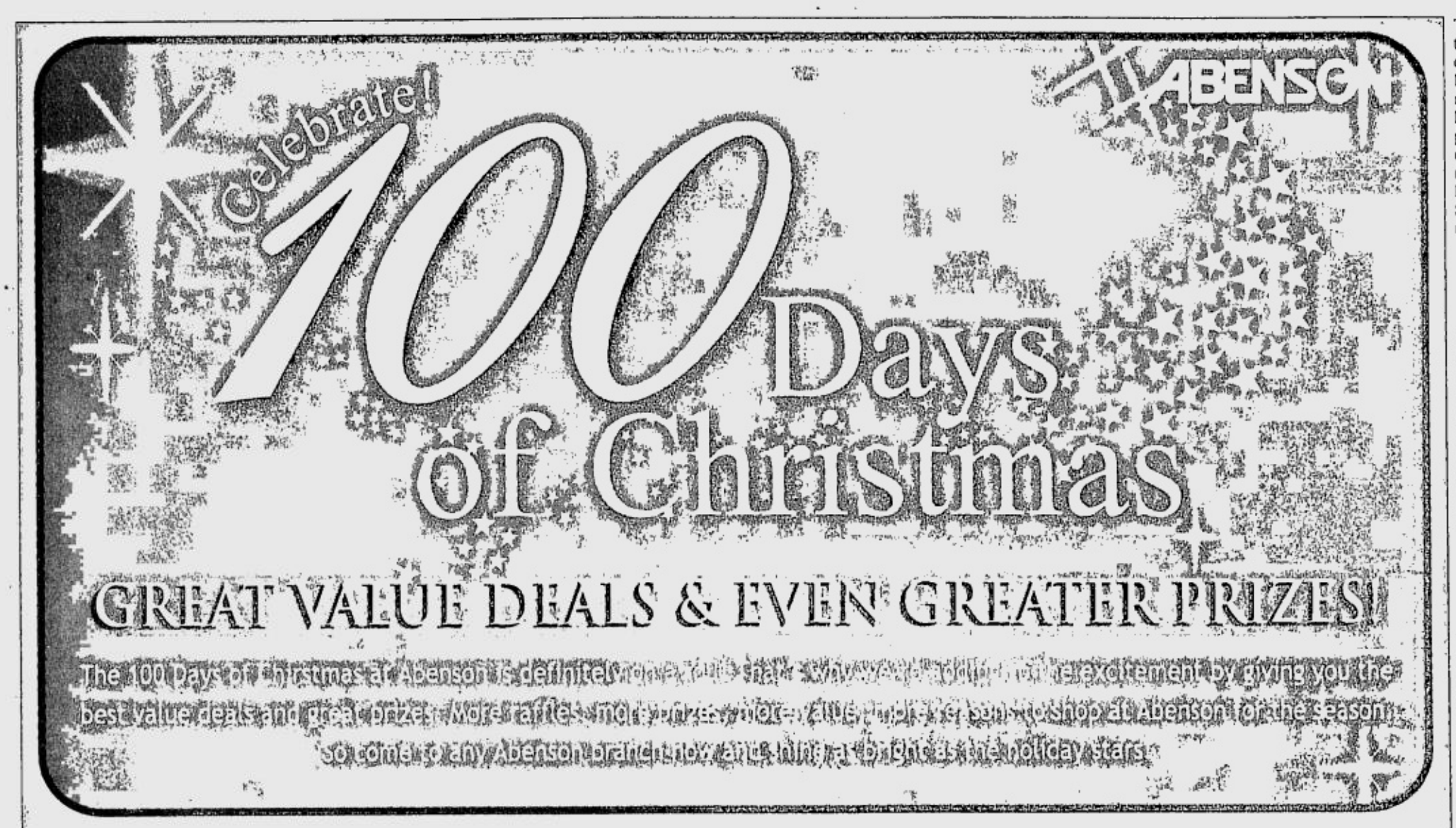

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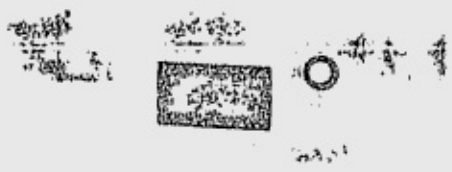

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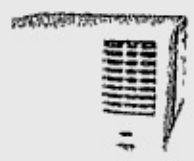

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Amid 'meningo' scare, TB spreads

By Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

MENINGOCOCCEMIA, the meningitis strain that health authorities say is an old disease that media have bestowed "stardom status," should not distract the public from being vigilant against other creeping deadly diseases, such as tuberculosis or TB, say health experts.

From Marcelo H. del Pilar of the Propaganda Movement to Commonwealth President Manuel L. Quezon, tuberculosis has remained one of the top killers in the Philippines, now claiming the life of at least one Filipino every minute, says Dr. Charles Cheng, president of the Baguio AIDS Watch Council (Awac).

Awac is a group of private and government health experts and advocates monitoring AIDS.

TB, Cheng says, is also an urgent concern of Awac because most persons with AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) die of secondary infections such as TB and pneumonia.

The TB bacteria (*Tubercle bacilli*) is still so widespread that 70 percent of Filipinos have them, says Dr. Celia Flor Brillantes of the Baguio health department's social hygiene clinic. "This means the TB bacteria can attack a person once his immune system weakens."

TB strikes people of all ages but is more common among the elderly. Other people at greater risk of getting tuberculosis are those with weakened immune system, such as people with AIDS and those malnourished.

This has prompted private and government health experts to include TB in their information campaign about AIDS, which, as the World Health Organization initiated, is again the focus of World AIDS Month this month.

According to Cheng, a person with AIDS can have a better chance of prolonging his life, thus making his remaining years productive, if he is not infected with TB.

Vaccine

In many parts of the world, health experts have used a vaccine called BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guerin), which is given to newly delivered infants, to treat TB. But the vaccine, say medical reports, is not always effective, especially among certain populations, and some TB strains have become resistant to drugs.

In the Philippines, not all babies are delivered in hospitals, which make it a standard procedure to administer the BCG vaccine to newborns, says Cheng. He says more babies in the country, such as in rural villages, are delivered in homes.

Congested homes and schools, which are common in the country, also help spread the TB bacteria, says Cheng.

He cites how TB-infected grandparents live with children and grandchildren in cramped dwellings. In many schools, as many as 70 students are packed in a classroom, making it easier for the bacteria to spread, he says.

"And sad to say many Filipinos still have to learn not to spit anywhere," he said.

It takes six hours under direct sunlight for the TB bacteria to die. Thus, it takes longer for the bacteria to die under damp and dark areas, and the worst thing is the bacteria can mix with dust, which can be transmitted through the air, says Cheng.

"Proper sanitation and hygiene plus good nutrition can help a lot in preventing tuberculosis but we need to educate and reeducate people about all these," he said.

Treatment

Tuberculosis can be treated through a three- to six-month medication. But the problem is some Filipinos, who are too poor to afford the medication, do not complete the required duration of treatment. This worsens the situation as the disease becomes resistant to drugs, says Cheng.

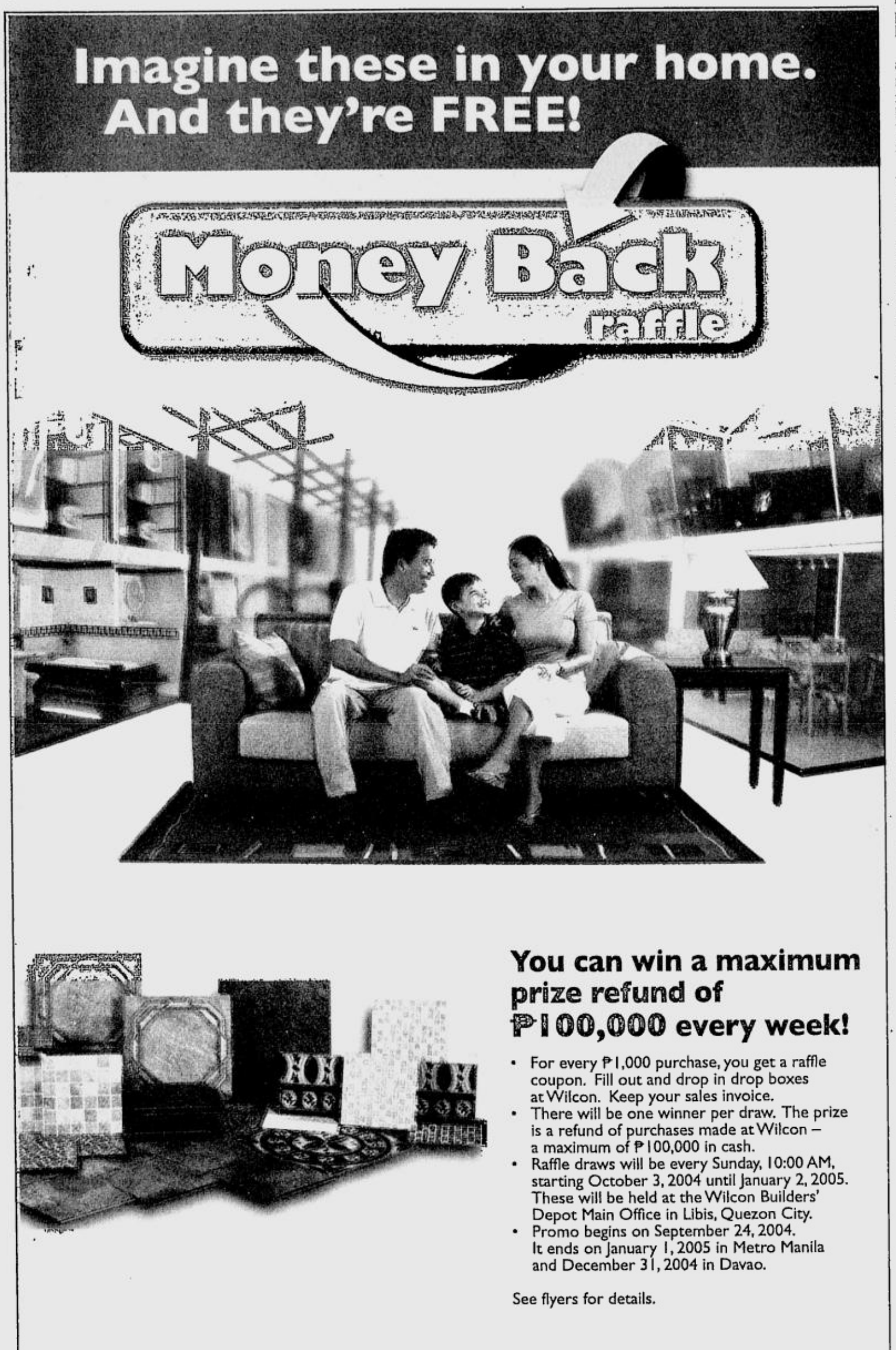
The disease then becomes harder and costlier to treat, requiring at least P250,000 worth of more potent medicines per patient, he says.

The public is advised to be aware of the symptoms of tuberculosis, including a lingering cough that is usually not severe and often mistaken for a lingering cold.

Coughing up a cheese-like material called sputum, which is mixed with mucus, is the most common early symptoms of tuberculosis.

If blood vessels in the lungs are damaged, an infected person may have blood in the sputum. In advanced stages, the patient may expel large quantities of blood.

Other symptoms of advanced tuberculosis are chest pain, fever, sweating at night, fatigue, weight loss and loss of appetite.



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2007 Series of 2004

From 'basi' taster to Baguio mayor

By Frank Cimatu
Baguio City

BASI is that quintessential Ilocano home brew.

Made from fermented sugarcane juice and flavored with local tree bark and berries, *basi* is deceptively sweet. You have a fine time drinking it but once you get up, the world will literally revolve around you.

Till the next morning, you know what "punch drunk" feels and means. The Ilocanos cherish their *basi* so much that when the Spaniards decided to impose monopoly on liquor in September 1807, the small town of Piddig in Ilocos Norte fought with bamboo spears, bows and arrows and scythes against the Spaniards, and surprisingly won.

The revolt almost reached Vigan but was eventually stopped after two weeks.

Although the Igorots have mastered the art of brewing *basi*, many Ilocano towns boast that they make the definitive *basi*.

But in Baguio City, that glory would go to nearby Naguilian and Aringay towns in La Union. Ilocanos getting married in Baguio would have someone dig up a jar of *basi* from Naguilian and bring it to the city.

In the 1930s, a young boy from Aringay had the enviable task of being a *basi* taster.

"When I was young, our family made *basi*. Sometimes we had 100 jars. When it came to tasting... I was the taster," said Baguio Mayor Braulio Yaranon during a recent round-table meeting with the INQUIRER Northern Luzon Bureau.

Yaranon, the eldest among five boys and a girl, would taste from the 100 jars and discern which had gone sour. Those that turned sour were dug up and removed and packaged as Ilocano vinegar, the local (and very much cheaper) version of balsamic vinegar.

"I used to taste as many as 60 jars. Of course, I just tasted it with my tongue," he said.

When the *basi* is sweet, the jar is re-covered with banana leaves and "cemented" with wet ash and buried from six months to a year, Yaranon said.

"We had some land devoted to sugarcane. We had this carabao-drawn mill every harvest time," he said. The cane was manually fed into the mill and the resulting juice was boiled. Yeast from rice flour was then added.

YARANON VINCENT CABREZA

People looking for the inner fire inside the 77-year-old Yaranon can stop right there. This is the man who had ingested *basi* at an age when we were still prohibited from drinking soft drinks. Maybe this is the same fire that catapulted him to become the mayor of the coldest city in the country.

Don Quixote

He was the Don Quixote bent on fighting formidable windmills like corruption, patronage politics and moral degeneration and he slew them or is still trying to.

Yaranon was known more as "Judge," having been a respectable La Union judge for a long time. He succeeded his wife Lilia as councilor and was known as the "fiscalizer" during his one term.

He was not given a chance when he ran for mayor but with a campaign fund of only P300,000, he was able to swamp his rivals.

His age was made an issue against him and he countered by attending as many sorties as possible. In one sortie we attended, at the Irisan garbage dump, his rival, who was the guest speaker, rushed out after he talked, probably overpowered by the smell. But Yaranon stayed on and even ate there.

As it turned out, one of his secrets to long life is literally holding his breath.

"(We need) plenty of oxygen. I hold my breath for five seconds, 10, 50 till a minute. The purpose of that is to keep the tissue elastic. As one gets older, he needs a lot of oxygen actually. Oxygen is the only element that rejuvenates the body cells. You practically retard the aging process," he said.

"My blood pressure is 90 over 60. My blood sugar is normal. I don't have arthritis," he said.

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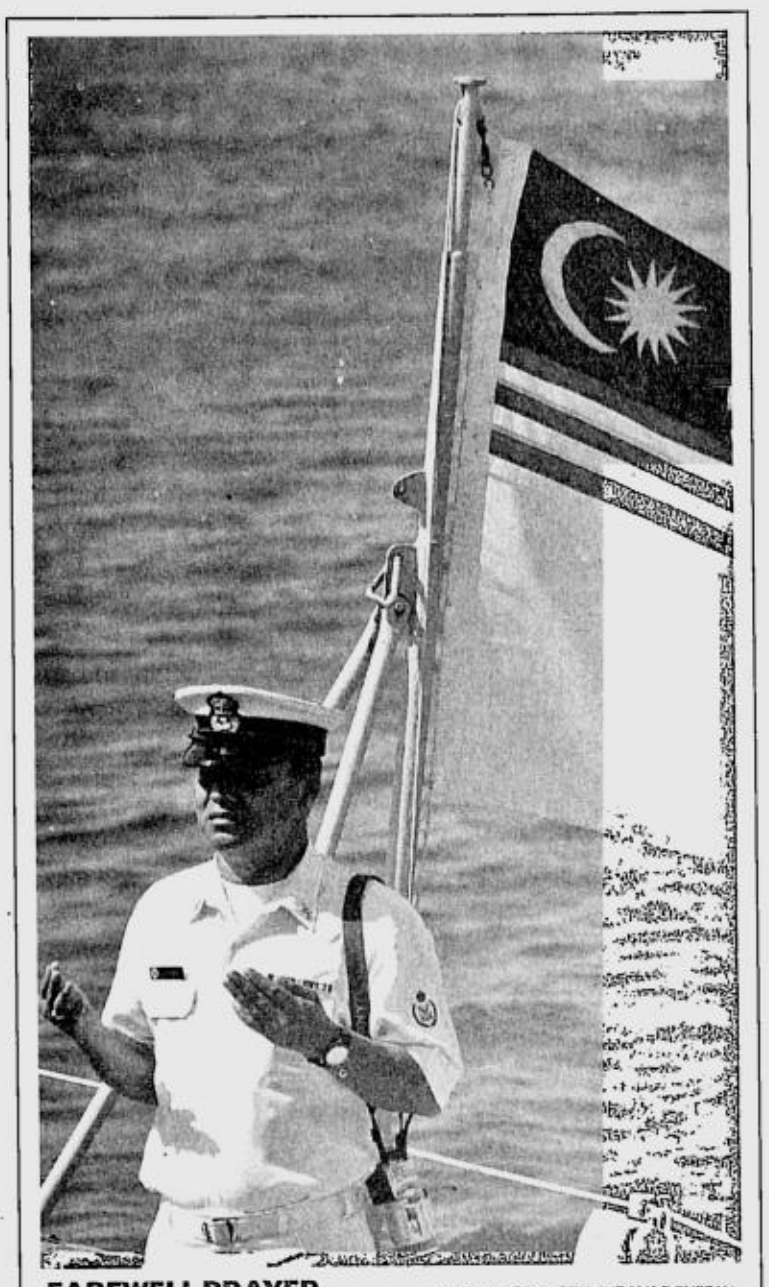

FAREWELL PRAYER TROY MALCOLM/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

A Malaysian navy man offers prayers before departing the port of Zamboanga City after a week-long naval exercise with Philippine navy personnel.

Logging syndicate tagged in rape of Sierra Madre

LUCENA CITY—A Quezon official has revealed the existence of an illegal logging syndicate based in Mauban town, which, he said, had been responsible for the denudation of the Sierra Madre in Isabela, Cagayan and Aurora.

"Ask any logger in northern Luzon who's the big-time group in the illegal logging trade in the area and they would surely point to the Mauban Boys. They are the biggest syndicate of illegal loggers operating in Sierra Madre in that part of Luzon," Quezon board member Eladio Pasamba, also a native of Mauban, told the INQUIRER yesterday.

He said the so-called "Mauban Boys" had been regularly hauling logs from northern Luzon to Mauban, passing through the Pacific Ocean.

Pasamba said the illegal cargo is loaded in barges and always escorted by unscrupulous elements from the maritime police and the naval force.

Mauban, some 157 km east southeast of Manila, is at the mid-section of the eastern coast of the province. On its north lies the tip of the Sierra Madre.

The east side of the municipality opens to Lamon Bay and further east, to the Pacific Ocean.

Pasamba, a lawyer and accountant, declined to identify who composed the group, saying that different government agencies knew their names.

"The members of Mauban Boys are all popular in our town. Lots of my town mates have become millionaires from (the) logging business, legal and illegal," he said.

But he said illegal loggers from his town only operate in northern Luzon.

He said the recent raid on at least six sawmills in the town was a step in the right direction.

"Those sawmills were owned by some of the Mauban Boys. But there were still lots of sawmills and hot log dumping areas, which the government authorities have yet to discover," Pasamba said. *Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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3 more cultists charged with Cebu lawyer's slay

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Central Visayas (CIDG 7) has charged three more members of the cult group Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association (PBMA) with involvement in the killing of human rights lawyer Arbet Sta. Ana Yongco.

The CIDG 7 filed at the Cebu City prosecutor's office a murder case against Nestor Carrol, MSgt. Heracleo Rallestan and Eddie Ardita. All three were tagged as conspirators of Michel Favila, also a PBMA member and the alleged killer of Yongco.

The PBMA is headed by Ruben Ecleo Jr., the cult group's so-called "supreme master."

Yongco was the private prosecutor of the parricide case against Ecleo, who stands accused of killing his wife Alona Bacolod-Ecleo in 2002.

A separate murder case has already been filed against Favila after four eyewitnesses, including a 10-year-old girl, positively identified him as the gunman. His case is pending before the Department of Justice for preliminary investigation.

In this recent development, at least three witnesses identified Carrol, Rallestan and Ardita as the ones they saw together with Favila on Oct. 11, the day Yongco was shot to death inside her law office in Barangay Zapatera.

CIDG officials said the witnesses identified Carrol as the driver of the red motorcycle used by Favila. Ardita and Rallestan allegedly acted as "lookouts" of Favila.

The three witnesses went voluntarily to the CIDG 7 on Dec. 3 and 4 after they heard of the arrest of eight PBMA members in Barangay Mactan, Lapu-Lapu City.

Carrol and Rallestan were among the eight suspects who were arrested on Dec. 3 after they were caught at a checkpoint in Barangay Mactan in possession of several high-powered firearms, handguns, ammunition and explosives.

Cases of illegal possession of firearms, ammunition and explosives were filed against the eight suspects before the Municipal Trial Court in Cities and Regional Trial Court in Lapu-Lapu City.

Carrol and Rallestan were arrested anew on Dec. 8 by the CIDG after witnesses executed their sworn statements officially implicating them in the Yongco murder case.

Ardita, 25, was arrested on Dec. 3 after he was charged with car theft.

CIDG officials said the other red motorcycle used as a getaway vehicle in the Yongco murder was recovered from Ardita.

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Marines kill 2 Abu Sayyaf suspects

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Marines killed at least two suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits and arrested two others during a raid in Campo Islam in Barangay Lower Calarian here on Tuesday morning.

Only one of the slain suspects had been identified. Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, Southern Command chief, identified the slain suspect as Hairi Alim, 46.

He said the arrested suspects were Sappi Baladji and Abdurasim Alim, younger brother of slain suspect Hairi.

Braganza said four other suspects managed to escape when the raiding team swooped down on a house in Campo Islam around 5:45 a.m.

He said the Marines were also able to recover two grenades and two .22 Beretta pistols.

"We will send the photos of the arrested suspects to Manila so that former hostages could confirm their identities," Braganza said.

But the wife of the slain suspect said he was an innocent civilian.

The wife told a local television station that her husband was a fish vendor at the Mercado Extension in the downtown area.

On Dec. 8, a suspected Abu Sayyaf subleader involved in the 2001 siege of Lamitan was arrested in Sumisip, Basilan.

Military intelligence agents, backed by elements of the 103rd Infantry Brigade, raided the house of Quirino Manajil Lambungan alias Asmalul in Limbo Candiis Village and arrested the suspect.

Braganza said Lambungan was with the Abu Sayyaf group that attacked the Jose Torres Memorial Hospital in June 2001 and snatched several people including nurses Reina Malonzo, Sheila Tabunag and Edibora Yap.

Yap was later killed, along with American hostage Martin Burnham, during a botched military rescue operation in Sirawai, Zamboanga del Norte.

Braganza said military achievements such as the arrest of Lambungan have been contributing a lot to efforts against the Abu Sayyaf.

On Dec. 4, a suspected Abu Sayyaf bandit was killed while four others were arrested in a raid in Barangay Camino Nuevo here.

The raid was conducted by members of the Marine Battalion Landing Team, Task Force Zamboanga and the police after a week of surveillance.

Killed was Mahan Badjar alias Abu Muslim, who allegedly resisted arrest. *Troy Malcolm, with a report from Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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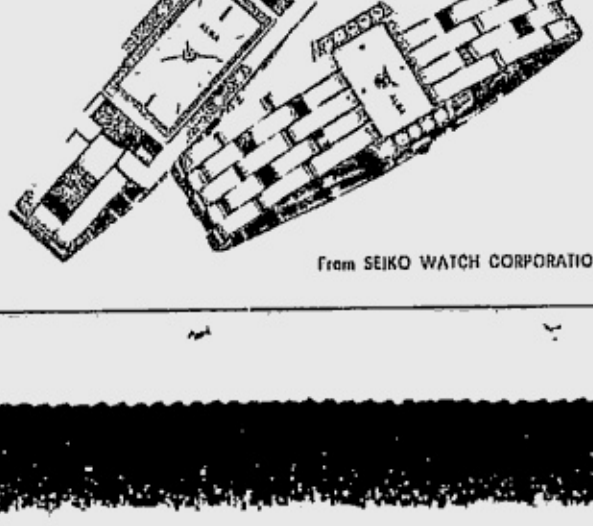

From SEIKO WATCH CORPORATION

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FPJ election protest lives on, say lawyers

From page A1

be Loren because she has interest in the case," he said.

According to Brillantes, public interest requires that the election protest continue in order to clear up once and for all any doubt as to the real winner of the May presidential election.

Besides Legarda, the other party who may substitute for Poe in pursuing the protest is Vice President Noli de Castro because either of them could benefit if it prospers and Ms Arroyo is ousted, Brillantes said, adding:

"But, of course, we do not expect him (De Castro) to do that."

Legarda had also filed an election protest against De Castro.

Consensus, cost

Brillantes said leaders of the opposition, Poe's family and Legarda would have to reach an agreement on what action to take.

"There will have to be a consensus among our political leaders whether to continue with the protest. There is also the family factor and, of course, Legarda's consent. We have to consider the finances here," he said.

Brillantes said that while Poe had received financial contributions for his election protest, Legarda would have to decide whether she would take on the process that could cost P50 million.

"That is not a small amount, and we have to know if she can afford it," he said. "We will also have to consider the feelings of Poe's family and the support of the people."

Brillantes said he had spoken with opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. about the matter.

Will of electorate

He said he had 30 days to inform the Supreme Court if the opposition would continue with the case and who would substitute for Poe.

Citing the high court ruling in the case of Jimmy de Castro vs the Commission on Elections (1997), Chavez said: "While an incumbent holding a public office relinquishes his post upon his death because his position is personal to the public office, an electoral contest is imbued with paramount public interest and it does not involve merely conflicting private aspirations."

He said the purpose of an election protest was "to find out the will of the electorate."

"It is not correct to say that the death of FPJ renders his electoral protest moot and academic," Chavez said. "As a matter of fact, it survives because the Supreme Court said so in the case of De Castro and the Comelec."

Chavez said Vice President De Castro would succeed Ms Arroyo should the PET declare Poe winner of the May presidential election.

He said that if both Poe and Legarda were declared winners, the latter would become the new President.

WAITING outside the Arlington funeral parlor where FPJ's remains were brought, children carry huge posters that recall his brief and all too unhappy foray into politics. JOAN BONDOC

PRESIDENTIAL bet Poe listening to a political ally during the hectic, three-month campaign. PDI PHOTO

Reset to next year

Chavez also predicted that Poe's death would usher the "return of the days of brinkmanship of the Filipino people," who, he said, were now "tottering between two edges."

The PET has reset to early next year the hearing on the oral arguments on Poe's election protest.

Court spokesperson Ismael Khan Jr. said the tribunal made the decision after Poe's lawyer Sixto Brillantes and Ms Arroyo's lawyer Romulo Macalintal sought last Thursday a postponement of the hearing.

The PET was scheduled to hear yesterday the oral arguments on Ms Arroyo's "affirmative defenses" against Poe's allegations that she cheated him in the May 10 election.

Brillantes said the Poe camp had asked that the hearing be reset because yesterday was the court's last working day preparatory to a judicial recess until early next month.

Macalintal said he and Brillantes filed a joint manifestation seeking a postponement of the hearing as early as Dec. 9 without knowing that Poe would get sick and even die.

"We just did not want to be arguing during the Christmas season," Macalintal said.

Among the issues that will be deliberated on when the legal battle resumes is Poe's citizenship.

Ms Arroyo had questioned Poe's legal standing to file an election protest, claiming that the Supreme Court had not categorically ruled that the actor was a natural-born Filipino citizen.

She had also asked the PET to dismiss the protest on grounds of insufficiency in form and substance.

Poe asked the tribunal on July 23 to declare him the rightful winner in the May election. He alleged that Ms Arroyo cheated in the election returns from 10,554 precincts in seven provinces, one city and seven municipalities, and in the ballot results from 118,339 precincts in 42 cities and provinces.

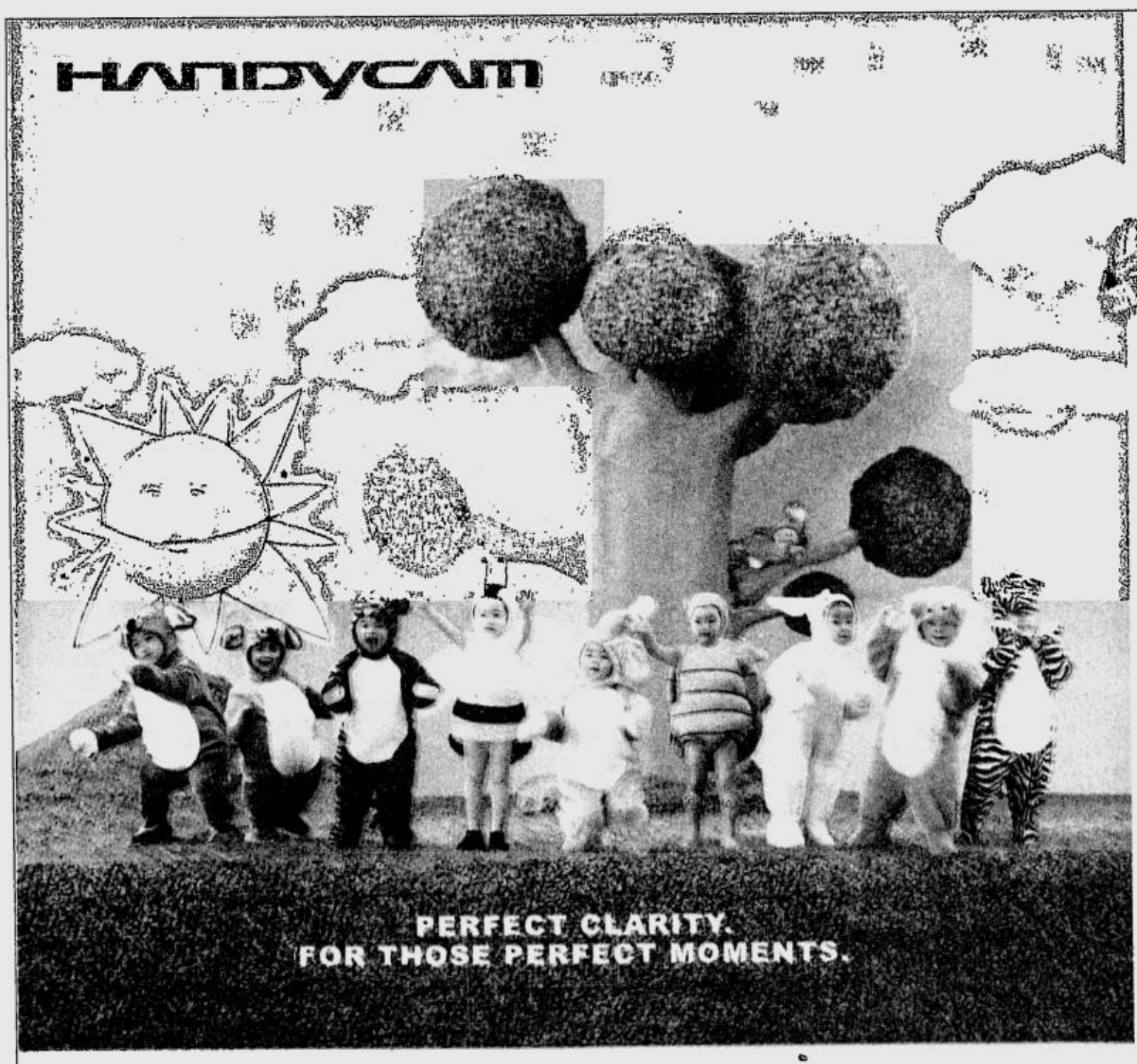
In turn, Ms Arroyo questioned the results from around 20,000 precincts in Nueva Ecija, Rizal, Quezon, South Cotabato, Northern Samar and Ilocos Norte.

Family decision

As far as Malacañang is concerned, Poe's family, and not his political allies, should make the call on whether his election protest should be continued, Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said in a phone interview.

Defensor, Ms Arroyo's campaign spokesperson, also said the Palace would have no problem if Poe's family decided to push through with the protest: "It's their prerogative."

But he appealed to Poe's political supporters not to capitalize on the actor's passing for political ends. *With reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr., Christine O. Avendano and Juliet Labog-Javellana*



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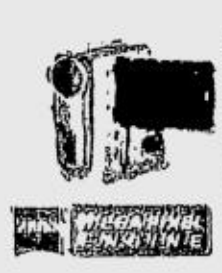

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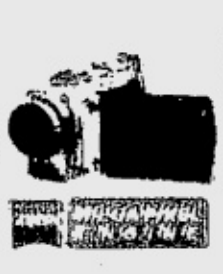

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Doc: He went gently into the night

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE NEUROLOGIST who attended to Fernando Poe Jr. while he lay in a coma at St. Luke's Medical Center said the movie actor went away gently.

"He died peacefully," Dr. Abdias Aquino told the INQUIRER.

But Aquino said he would only talk about Poe's last hours "when all the emotions have died down."

He said that Poe's wife, Susan Roces, and other relatives had allowed him to talk about the issue but that he decided not to say anything at length out of respect for the family.

While the doctor agreed that the public had a right to know what really happened to the movie idol, he admitted that he still felt uneasy talking about it.

"It's still fresh you know," he said. "Let them mourn. It's better to let the emotions die down first. I already asked their permission and they agreed. But I still feel it's not yet time (to talk about it). I will talk about it maybe after the burial."

Aquino, a friend of Poe's family, said he was not aware of any medical record of Poe in the hospital.

On the rumor that Poe was "clinically dead" even before the announcement of his death, Aquino said it was difficult to say so.

Pressed to elaborate, Aquino said that Sen. Juan Flavier's interpretation of the first medical bulletin issued by the hospital and as printed in the INQUIRER was "close to what had happened to him."

Aquino said it would have been too difficult for Poe to survive his condition, citing only a few cases of survival.

Aquino, however, dismissed speculation that Poe's condition was aggravated by the actor's reputed drinking habits, saying it had nothing to do with his illness.

"There have been many speculations. It's not fair to the patient. I don't think that (drinking) is related," he said.

The INQUIRER tried to get a copy of Poe's death certificate from the hospital but was told that the policy was to release the death certificate only to the family members or relatives of the patient.

FPJ wake at Sto. Domingo

THE STO. Domingo Church in Quezon City has allowed the family of Fernando Poe Jr. to use the Mortuary of Saint Martin for the wake for the late movie actor.

The mortuary, which is located on the right side of the church and is separated by doors from the main chapel, can hold only around 40 people.

The main chapel could not be used for Poe's wake because the nine-day Simbang Gabi starts today and a wedding is scheduled at the chapel on Dec. 16, according to Mario Ambiong of the Sto. Domingo information office.

He said the church, which can accommodate up to 30,000 people standing even outside on the courtyard, usually overflows with attendees who fulfill the nine-day dawn Mass. *Blanche S. Rivera*

GMA faces uphill fight to gain people's trust–Pulse Asia poll

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's prospects appear bleak.

The millions of people who voted for Fernando Poe Jr. still believe she cheated her way to victory in May, and her failure to make much progress on reform since then has further shaken trust in her, said Felipe Miranda, head of the polling firm Pulse Asia.

"I think she has exhausted quite a lot of the political capital that normally, Filipinos would extend to anyone who is a new president. It is not so easy for the public to get over [its] feelings of anger, frustration and distrust in the administration," Miranda said.

He also said a new Pulse Asia survey had found that trust in Ms Arroyo's administration had for the first time fallen below that in the administration of her disgraced predecessor, Joseph Estrada.

But the opposition, which was split by Poe's candidacy, has yet to reunite and mount a coherent challenge to Ms Arroyo.

That, and the realization among many Filipinos that reform is necessary, should give her a last chance to push ahead with reforms in the next six months without risking her job, said analyst Ramon Casiple.

"She has to be a leader, she has to be out there in front," Casiple said. "If she doesn't do that, then her popularity slide would increase and she would have a very difficult year ahead of her." *Reuters*

Susan tells fans: You are part of our lives

From page A1

of our lives. Now, you are still with me," she said.

At around 4 p.m. yesterday, the bereaved family allowed the viewing of Poe's remains at the Arlington East Plaza, abandoning the previous plan to make the wake a private affair.

Roces said she promised not to begrudge his fans and "all those who had been a part of his life" their presence at the wake.

Baby Ericta, a niece of the late movie idol, said the family decided to let the fans in because of how hot it had become outside. The fast swelling crowd also made the decision easier to make.

Ericta said the family chose to continue the wake at Sto. Domingo Church on Quezon Avenue to accommodate more people. She said the family also did not want to add to the traffic congestion.

"Mrs. Poe remembers how Mr. Poe loved the people," she said.

Marian devotee

Col. Raul Medina said an estimated crowd of 2,500-3,000 squeezed through the gates to reach the line outside the chapel.

The viewing time was very brief, but it was enough for some of the fans. The others, however, braved the crowd again and lined up a second, even a third, time.

The small chapel had a blue carpet leading to the half-open casket alongside which sat a basket of flowers.

The body was dressed in a black suit—Poe's favorite, according to his wife—and a blue tie with white polka dots that was personally chosen by the couple's daughter, Mary Grace Llamanzares.

"Ronnie was a Marian devotee, and blue is a Marian color," said Roces.

She said blue in all its varying tints happened to be his favorite color, too.

She added that Poe's fans could watch his movies over and over again, but that this was their last chance to see him.

All welcome

Roces said all visitors were welcome to the wake for her husband.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye came as the representative of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The President wants to send her condolences to Susan Roces and her family. Malacañang Masses starting today will be dedicated for Poe's intentions," Bunye said, adding:

"We were received well by the family. Susan thanked the President for the rosary and the letter that she sent while FPJ was in the hospital."

Roces later said the rosary and letter were handed to her by Speaker Jose de Venecia's wife, Gina.

"The President acknowledges FPJ as a great Filipino. The respect for [him] as a kind and generous person will always be there," Bunye said.

He said he was there to check the schedule of the interment and see whether Ms Arroyo could personally visit.

Roces said the wake would be held until Dec. 22 at Sto. Domingo Church.

Poe will be buried at the North Cemetery in Manila beside his parents and brother.

Amazing grace

Roces was a picture of amazing grace as Poe lay dying, according to his running mate in the May presidential election.

"In all the three days that I was with her in the hospital, she was always calm and gracious," former Sen. Loren Legarda said of Roces. "She's an amazing woman, although she was very, very sad."

The actress, Jesusa Sonora-Poe in real life, was also a calming presence during Poe's brief confinement at the Neuro-Intensive Care Unit of the St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City.

Legarda had earlier brought the miraculous image of Our Lady of Manaoag to Poe's bedside.

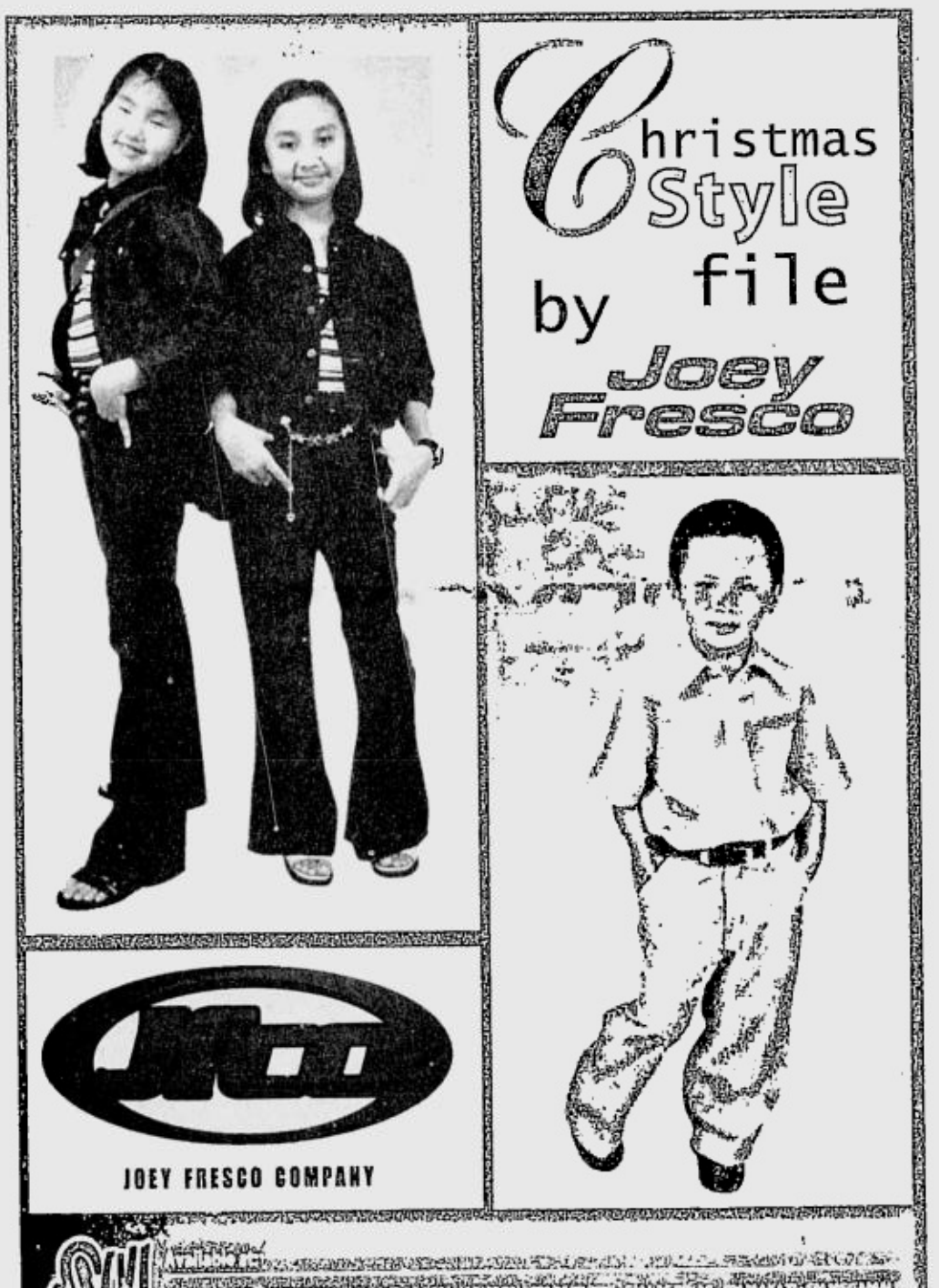
By her account, Roces received the image and invited her to pray. Afterwards, she said, Roces embraced her tightly.

"We didn't talk about Ronnie's medical condition," Legarda said. "We simply comforted each other. She was strong and understanding and was not blaming anyone or anything. Such a picture of amazing grace."

Composure

At Arlington East, Roces maintained the composure that helped get her grieving family and friends through the initial shock of Poe's stroke and his passing.

Security was extremely tight at the funeral home, and the guards kept fans and even members of the media at bay, to allow the family as much privacy as possible. But the actress wrote the guards a note to let her friends in: "To whom it may concern: Kindly allow my friends Peter and Luisa Cagalingan to enter the church and the wake as they are my very good friends. Thank you, Susan Roces." *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*



GMA wreath torched by Poe diehards

From page A1

the flowers.

"*Ang kapal mo, ang kapal mo* (How shameless you are)," about a dozen supporters chanted as they destroyed the wreath on the church yard.

Ms Arroyo had also wanted to visit Poe while he was lying in a coma on Sunday morning at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City but she was reportedly rebuffed by the movie actor's relatives.

A Malacañang source said Ms Macapagal had attempted several times to be allowed to visit Poe beginning on Sunday morning, just hours after he suffered a massive stroke. But Poe's relatives politely turned down her requests, saying it was not the right time.

The President persisted and even asked to be allowed to attend Poe's wake at Arlington Chapels in Pasig City, according to the source. But Poe's relatives still said no, prompting the President to just send a representative.

Warning

In a news conference, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago warned that Poe's supporters were likely to take his death hard and that "professional saboteurs" could in turn take advantage of their grief.

She said the big groups that had gathered at the St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City to keep vigil "should be an indication of how many of his committed followers are going to be emotionally distressed by his death."

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said there would be an "initial outpouring" of "grief and resentment" against the Arroyo administration because of the perception that Poe was "cheated of the presidency."

"I hope that the hotheads in the ranks of the opposition will not prevail, that reason will dissipate the tensions as the days go by," Pimentel told reporters.

Pimentel also advised Ms Arroyo against attending the wake for Poe: "I suppose the tension is quite high at this stage. Maybe it would be wiser for her not to go."

Bunye as representative

Sent to the Arlington chapels to convey her condolences was Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

Asked if Ms Arroyo would go to Poe's wake, Bunye said: "I'm sure the President will send a representative at this time and we will see what the arrangements are at some later time."

He denied that Ms Arroyo was being deterred by angry supporters of Poe from going to the hospital and later the wake.

"No, no. The President is very sincerely condoling with the family but just right now we don't know what the preparations are," Bunye said.

In a statement issued hours after Poe was declared dead, Ms Arroyo said: "I condole with his wife and family and I shall always pray for his eternal rest in the hands of God."

A worthy adversary

Ms Arroyo said the 3 p.m. daily Mass at the Malacañang Chapel, which she attends, will be said for Poe.

"Fernando Poe Jr. was a good man, a worthy adversary in politics and a great Filipino," she said.

The President said she prayed hard for Poe's life since the opposition Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino's standard-bearer fell into a coma on Saturday.

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RP mourns death of FPJ from north to south

From page A1

were tears in my eyes until later. I did not know that I was crying," Ramallosa said.

Even the Muslims in Quiapo are walking slowly "as if carrying a heavy heart."

Many were in tears as thousands of ordinary Filipinos filed past the metallic, maroon coffin where their king lay in his favorite suit.

Some of those who came to view Poe's remains at the Arlington chapel in Pasig City were in slippers. Others looked unwashed.

Poe, 65, was in a black suit and a blue tie with white polka dots.

Outside the chapel, several people sat on the pavement and on the grass, weeping and consoling each other.

Most of the fans had come from cities in Metro Manila. Others had arrived by jeep, some by tricycle, still others just walked.

His remains were to be transferred later last night to the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City.

The actor is to be buried on Dec. 22 but no decision has been reached on where, said Rep. Francis Escudero, Poe's spokesperson during the May presidential election campaign. Earlier plans to bury Poe at the La Loma Cemetery where his father, Fernando Poe Sr. lies, are not final, he said.

At Sto. Domingo Church, FPJ's coffin was to be placed at the right corner, said actor Rez Cortez, chair of the National Coordinating Center for (Poe) Volunteers.

As early as 6 p.m., long before the coffin was to arrive, hundreds of people had begun gathering in the church grounds.

Cortez said everything had been taken care of, including liturgical services and the flow of an expected tens of thousands of people who would come to view Poe's remains.

A trailer van which Poe used when he was shooting films will be the temporary quarters of the Poe family, according to Cortez.

VARIATIONS on a theme: Mourning woman prostrates herself before the photo of FPJ upon learning that he had passed away. RAFFY LERMA

"There will be a Mass and after that it will be open to the public," Cortez said.

In Congress, a senator urged that the man simply called FPJ be conferred the National Artist award.

News of Poe's illness and death gripped a nation where movie heroics offer a rare diversion from dire poverty.

President Macapagal-Arroyo mourned his death, saying: "Fernando Poe Jr. was a good man, a worthy adversary in politics and a great Filipino."

The United States, through its embassy in Manila, also offered its condolences.

"Mr. Poe will be remembered with great fondness as much for his singular role as the 'Da King' of Philippine cinema as for his entry into the political arena as a presidential candidate," the embassy said in a statement.

Most beloved son

"We extend our deepest condolences to his widow, his family, and friends as well as to his many movie fans and political supporters in their hour of loss."

San Carlos City mourned its most beloved son as residents began hanging black ribbons from trees.

"This is just our way of paying tribute to him," said Clarence Cagampan, chair of Barangay Palaris in the city proper.

Poe's late father, Fernando Sr., was a native of this city.

I. V. Delgado closed her restaurant in Novaliches, Quezon City, and rented a jeep to go to the chapel, where Poe's remains were temporarily laid. Some 15 people—the restaurant's crew—went with her.

"We are all loyal fans. We are all pro-FPJ," she said. Her cook brought a photo of Poe with him.

Today, Cordillera leaders will perform a *cañao* (ritual feast) for the late actor. The ritual involves the butchering of pigs.

"We want his soul to be appeased," said community leader Nicolas Cawed, referring to the political divisions that fractured the country after the May elections. "We also want that we will not be visited by bad luck."

Never mind that Poe's wake will be held in a Catholic enclave, the Sto. Domingo Church.

Heavy Muslim hearts

Several Muslims plan to go there to mourn the loss of not just a movie superstar but a kindred soul who understood and shared the pride of Muslims, said Datu Amerol Gulam Ambiong, chair of the Metro Manila Muslim Peace and Order Coordinating Council.

"The people here [at the Islamic Center in Quiapo] are not smiling. They walk slowly, as if carrying a heavy heart," Ambiong said.

Sen. Ralph Recto urged the government to pay the highest tribute to Poe by making him a National Artist.

"He did not hold public office but his influence was greater than those who had. Fate did not make him President, but to the people he was Da King," Recto said, urging senators to pass a resolution supporting such a declaration.

Poe's acts of charity

"For many families, Sundays were for talking to God, and watching Da King [in moviehouses)," Recto said.

Vice President Noli de Castro also voiced his sadness, saying: "He has been known not only for his greatness in the local movie industry, but also for his philanthropic deeds for the less privileged which were worthy to emulate."

Former Sen. Loren Legarda, Poe's running mate in the May 10 elections, said: "He will be missed by his multitude of fans and supporters who sincerely believe in the justness and correctness of the cause he fought for."

Soon after Poe died, a member of his staff said on radio that his makeup artist of over 40 years had gone to the funeral parlor to "make him handsome for the last time" before his body was taken to a church for public viewing.

Unfulfilled dream

Among Poe's visitors while he lay in a coma in the intensive care unit at St. Luke's Medical Center was former first lady Imelda Marcos.

"It is sad that Fernando Poe Jr., a truly good person, died of a broken heart, denied his vision of a dreamland country for the Filipino people," said Marcos.

For an hour yesterday, the death of Poe preoccupied the Senate, which was already pressed for time in its bid to pass Ms Arroyo's tax measures.

But the senators could not help but join in the national mourning.

Seventeen senators who were present joined Sen. Jinggoy Estrada in co-authoring a Senate resolution "expressing the profound condolence of the Senate on the untimely demise of Poe and honoring his contribution to Philippine socio-cultural and political development."

Among other things, the resolution recognized Poe for having throughout his life stood for "integrity, decency, sincerity, hard work and perseverance, qualities that have endeared him to the hearts and minds of the Filipino people."

Only one of his kind

"FPJ was probably the only presidential candidate who turned down contributions by the millions even as he needed the money whenever he perceived them to be 'investments' in his presidency," Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said.

"FPJ was in my mind, *sui generis*. A man alone. A class act unto himself," Pimentel added.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago said it was rare for a man to leave "such a strong impression" on the people.

Santiago said Poe was married to Susan Roces, who "matches his credentials in good breeding and culture."

Jinggoy Estrada said Poe was his godfather, counsel, friend and adviser.

"FPJ lived his life the way he lived his screen roles. He was the champion of the oppressed; the good, God-fearing, kind-hearted man who would come to the rescue."

Grief in the mountains

The Communist Party of the Philippines and the New People's Army also expressed their condolences.

"Let not his death weaken the resolve of the millions of his supporters to continue the principles and belief that FPJ had stood and fought for. They have to continue his fight," Communist spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal said in a mobile phone interview.

With reports from Michael Lim Ubac, TJ Burgonio, Cynthia D. Balana, Christine O. Avendaño, Vincent Cabreza and Estanislao Caldez, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Marlon Ramos, Romulo O. Ponte and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Luige A. del Puerto

'Ang Alamat' now a true indisputable legend

From page A1

litical supporters.

* * *

Be it as Panday, Asedillo, Aguila, Mediavillo, Daniel Barrion, or as Eseng Tondo, Totoy Bato, Pepeng Kaliwete or Roman Rapido, "FPJ" commanded awe and allegiance for these characters that were "soft-spoken but relentless, do-gooding but a loner, and distant with mystery."

These were the words of the late great Quijano de Manila, who concluded that Poe had chosen to be a "fairy-tale hero," one that fed "an older hunger in the masses" than other action stars, specifically Joseph Estrada and Zaldy Zshornack, ever could.

On top of this, the actor was precious copy, both because he was stingy with interviews and because his was a compelling story, indeed.

One fortunate writer was startled at the enthusiasm with which Poe threw himself into a rare on-location one-on-one over two decades ago. He was upbeat because it was a last shooting day, the actor explained. He had also taken his *cinco litros* (five liters) of beer. Not that he needed an excuse.

Pieces of his life then tumbled out between takes and more rounds of beer. His real name was Ronald Allan von Pou, he declared, even spelling it out. The revelation smacked of "Rumplestiltskin," and would turn out to be as astonishing as many other unbidden details.

Padre de familia

Ronnie said his father, actor-producer Fernando Poe Sr., was not bitten by a dog, as everyone had thought for years. But it was not incorrect to say he had died of rabies, he added, since a puppy had licked wounds on Poe Sr.'s leg.

At 11, Ronnie, the eldest son, played his first hero role as head of the family. Since Poe Sr.'s Royal Productions had promptly crashed, the boy took any job he could find, including, according to an old friend, pushing carts in the market.

Good grades, swimming skills and the ability to play at least one musical instrument had been Poe Sr.'s basic requirements for his six children. Ronnie had complied with every one of these, playing the violin as a boy, although none would prove as useful as another thing he had learned in his early years, during childhood summers spent in Baguio: horseback riding.

The young *padre de familia* (head of the family) also became proficient at knife targets. This would land him his first bit role in a movie: hitting a leaf on a tree with a knife. He didn't get paid, but was treated by the crew to all the beer he could drink.

First big role

After four years spent in dire need, the widow Bessie and her brood seemed to be looking at a brighter future. Meanwhile, Ronnie had stopped schooling.

In 1955, he was cast in "Anak ni Palaris." This was when he took the screen name Fernando Poe Jr. His father had played Palaris in an earlier movie. It was Ronnie's first real film role, for which he was paid a handsome P1,000.

The following year, he was in the first "Lo' Waist Gang," which spawned a series of hit sequels.

When FPJ signed a contract with Premiere Productions in 1958, he was something of a superstar, earning P3,000 per film.

As he told it, the contract was up for renewal in 1960, and he asked for a pay hike of P4,000 per film. No one had pulled such a stunt before, balking at the studio system. He was the first local movie "rebel." Premiere chose to release him.

He recalled working for six months as a doorman for P5 a day. Then a new movie outfit, Hollywood Far East, offered him "Markado." He demanded P8,000 ("I had been out of work for so long!") and, much to his surprise, got it.

There was always enough food in the house now. Ronnie was happy. After work, he would fetch his three sisters and two brothers from school and go straight home with them.

One-man industry

Most significantly, "Markado" started FPJ off on the cowboy path, his door to the big time. After saving up P60,000 in about two years, he put up his own company.

In its very first year, FPJ Productions made five movies. Ronnie became the country's first movie star to become his own producer. Other big names who would follow suit were Joseph Estrada, putting up JE Productions; Amalia Fuentes, AM Productions; Dolphy, RVQ Productions; Vilma Santos, VS Films; and Nora Aunor, NV Productions.

FPJ and Estrada stood their ground in 1963 against the "Big Four" syndicate that extorted "protection" money from movie stars and threatened them with disfigurement. This single act of courage made the two men industry gods.

FPJ Productions went on to produce an estimated 266 films, roughly six or seven a year, many of them blockbusters. Using the name Ronwaldo Reyes (his paternal grandmother's maiden surname), Ronnie became his own director as well for many of his own productions. The company has outlived the big-movie firms Sampaguita Pictures, LVN and Premiere Productions.

Admirers described him as a "one-man industry." He always said his one goal with every project was to please the moviegoers. Supporters would say years later, ring the presidential campaign, that FPJ Productions made movies mostly to keep the industry people employed.

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Box office king

In 1968, Ronnie married Susan Roces in what was invariably dubbed as "Wedding of the Year." At that point in his life, it seemed he couldn't ask for more. He was "Takilya (Box Office) King" in a world where he was sovereign.

Eventually the title ceased to refer only to ticket sales; he was called "Da King," period.

He went on to win five Best Actor trophies from the Filipino Academy for Movie Arts and Sciences for "Mga Alabok sa Lupa" (1967), "Asedillo" (1971), "Durugin si Totoy Bato" (1979), "Umpisahan Mo, Tatapusin Ko" (1983) and "Muslim Magnum .357" (1986). This elevated him to the Famas Hall of Fame.

Three of his movies were likewise named Famas best picture: "Sigaw ng Digmaan" (1963), "Mga Anghel na Walang Langit" (1970) and "Ang Padrino" (1984).

He was last seen on screen with billiards champion Efren "Bata" Reyes in "Pakners" last year.

Very private

FPJ was vigilant about keeping his privacy, so that news of personal pursuits—whether works of charity and real-life heroism or romantic escapades, or tiffs with some reporters—never took off beyond hushed exchanges.

He was once asked, mischievously, if he ever fell in love with a leading lady other than his wife (with whom he had made 17 movies). His cryptic answer: "I have to fall in love a little every time. This does not mean a physical encounter. For example, Boots Anson-Roa. *Ilang beses na akong na*-in love *d'yan* (I've fallen in love with her a few times). But it's not true that I courted them all."

More often, a sparking rumor was quelled by throwing a blanket of cold silence on it.

He was, however, unabashed in his praise for men he held in high esteem and deep affection. He could never quite forget Manuel "Juan Tamad" Conde who, he said, had tricks with the knife that he could only hope to imitate.

Favorite men

The late Jesus Lapid, a stuntman, was "a beautiful man, a beautiful person" who could stop a running horse with "sheer muscle power."

At the start of a controversy between Ronnie and Lito Lapid once, he had told the younger actor: "Do not make an enemy out of me. I honor your father's (Jesus) memory."

And he wished Susan had met another Lapid that he "respected and loved dearly," Jess, the action star.

For FPJ, the best actor in Philippine movies is ... "not me, although I'm better than Joseph Estrada," he liked to jest. "Berting Labra is *numero uno* (No. 1)! Next is *Pareng* Dolphy. They both have perfect timing, whether in comedy or drama."

When Labra, a "Lo' Waist Gang" chum was in prison, Ronnie visited him twice a year without fail. Needless to say, he looked after Labra's family in ways never publicly made known. That's the way FPJ wanted it.

In his kingdom, Da King had full control of his life.

Losing his cool

All these changed when he heeded politics' call. At first he stepped in just to help his friend Estrada, whose victory he assisted in no small measure. But when he ran for president himself, his world was turned upside down.

He was vilified big time, and the enemies started with his name, no less. Ronald Allan Kelly Poe. How could anyone with a name like that be Filipino?

A grown-up son, Ronian, with former co-star Anna Marin, was forced out of relative "hiding."

Da King had lost his privacy. Then he lost his cool. Surrounded by newsmen not exactly raised in movie press surroundings, he became disoriented and was given to outbursts that often disrupted sorties.

And yet he continued to drive rally crowds wild with a routine speech pieced together from titles of his movies.

"*Kahit butas ng karayom, papasukin ko para sa inyo* (I would go through the eye of the needle for you)," he would tell them. "*Kapag puno na ang salop, ayos na ang kasunod* (When the bucket overflows what happens next is inevitable). *Kailangan ko lang ay kahit konting pagtingin* (All I need is a little help). Audiences everywhere turned up in droves, listened in rapt attention, swooned, screamed and even chanted his name. They also had a lot of fun, since FPJ was always accompanied by friends from the movies, and some of the biggest names at that—Dolphy, Rudy Fernandez, Eddie Garcia, to name three of the "regulars."

Irreplaceable

At times when he failed to reach out to the journalists covering his campaign, he brought his case straight to the voters. "I am not a saint. I have enemies, too. But my enemies are big people. I have no enemies among the poor. I know you. I understand you."

And then he lost the elections in a dramatic finish. It was not easy to accept.

For his dwindling political army, *hindi pa tapos ang laban* (the struggle is not over), especially since he died on the day of the first hearing of his formal protest. *(Story on Page A1.)*

But even setting that aside, the film industry's anguish over his death is big enough news to hog newspaper and television headlines.

"He is irreplaceable," actress Caridad Sanchez said on TV, valiantly suppressing her tears. "Philippine movies will never be the same."

A true legend

At the hospital where he lay in a coma for less than two days, strangers turned up, weeping, to thank him for some help he had extended at some time. FPJ's own family was astounded.

For Da King, the last shooting day of every movie was celebration day. He would invariably show up in high spirits, announcing that every scene should be "take one" and could he please not be made to recite so many lines? And, of course, beer would flow.

A creature of habit—he kept his favorite shirts, pair of boots, pillows and blankets for years, not to mention that he cast practically the same people in his movies—Ronnie was celebrating on the last day he spent with some of the people closest to him.

He was happy, witnesses said. Not nearly as boisterous as usual, but happy just the same.

For sure his send-off will be one of the grandest and most emotional in the country's history. Never mind that he will not be riding into a cinematic sunset, or that he has left his last battle unresolved. Everything else that he had ever done more than makes him "Ang Alamat" now, a true, indisputable legend.

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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil ■ *Assistant Editor* Cenon B. Bibe

15 bank robbery suspects fall

By Christian V. Esguerra and Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FOR FIVE hours yesterday, Valenzuela City became the scene of a bank robbery and a bloody gun battle that saw the death of three suspects, two bystanders and a policeman.

Twelve suspects were reported arrested after police quickly responded to the robbery.

The suspects, which police said were part of the Waray-Waray criminal group, robbed the Banco de Oro branch on MacArthur Highway at about 9:30 a.m.

Fleeing in two white, heavily tinted Kia Pregio vans, about 15 suspects fled down Maysan Road toward the North Luzon Expressway.

However, witnesses and bank employees immediately alerted the police, who set up checkpoints along possible escape routes.

Along Paso de Blas in Barangay Canumay West, the suspects encountered a team from the Valenzuela police and opened fire.

PO2 Victor Zabala was hit and killed on the spot. His companions, Insp. Rhoderick Juan and PO1 Fernando Mariano, were wounded.

"They caught us by surprise with their high-powered firearms," Mariano later said.

The robbers peppered the police with bullets, said Director Avelino Razon Jr., director of the National Capital Region Police Office.

Unfazed, the lawmen fought back and held the suspects at bay until reinforcements from the Northern Police District Special Weapons and Tactics team, and from the Regional Special Action Force arrived.

The arrival of dozens of policemen forced the suspects to abandon their vehicles. Their loot in several sacks were left inside the vans.

Two suspects, including a certain "JR" whom arrested suspects later identified as their leader, were slain in the initial exchange of gunfire.

In their bid to elude arrest, some of the remaining suspects ran into a maze of alleys and houses on San Diego Street.

Some of the suspects fled into a warehouse where they took cover behind parked bulldozers and other heavy equipment.

Reporter Doland Castro of ABS-CBN was hit by shrapnel in the leg when a grenade thrown by the suspects exploded as he followed them into an alley.

Another suspect was killed in the ensuing pursuit operation, which, after five hours of house to house search, led to the arrest of 12 alleged gang members.

The Valenzuela City Hall reported that two bystanders, a 59-year-old businesswoman and a jeepney driver were also killed in the gun battle.

Some of the suspects sustained minor injuries from jumping high walls and tripping inside the compound.

Police identified those arrested as Zaldy Calim, Rey Ediser, Reynaldo Bustamante, Zaldy Mangalindan, Melvin Lacson, Chris Ablas, Jun Mendoza, Bunny Cervilla, Alex Adriano, Ricky Cabatsa, Ronnie Fernandez and Alejandro Candan.

The weapons seized from the group suggested its strength and notoriety: four M-16 and M-14 rifles, five rifle grenades, handguns, fragmentation grenades, military uniforms and combat boots.

New work sked plan on today

By Margaux C. Ortiz

STARTING today, employees from government and private companies will start work on a different schedule as part of the Staggered Working Time (SWT) scheme in an effort to ease up traffic brought about by the holiday season.

"It's all systems go for the scheme," Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chair Bayani Fernando told the INQUIRER in a phone interview, adding that the adjustment of work schedules would remove 30 percent of the workforce off the road. The scheme, contained in Memorandum Circular No. 81, would be implemented until Jan. 6.

Fernando said President Macapagal-Arroyo, who had approved the scheme over the weekend, issued an executive order yesterday mandating government and private employees to adjust their work hours.

"The scheme is actually mandatory," Fernando stressed, adding that they are initially expecting 50 percent of the workforce to comply with the SWT today.

Under the proposed scheme, government workers are required to work from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m., while private employees are asked to report from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The MMDA chair explained that the other companies still had to make some adjustments, and would still talk to their workers and labor unions regarding the scheme's implementation.

The Tripartite Industrial Peace Council, composed of representatives from the business and labor sectors, gave the MMDA a thumbs up to the proposal last week, Fernando said.

Faucets start drying up in metro; 50 tankers fielded

By Christine Gaylican

WATER has started to trickle from the faucets of consumers in some parts of Quezon City, Caloocan, Navotas, Malabon and Pasay City as west concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. reduced the delivery of the basic need in these areas.

Maynilad cut back its water supply by 25 percent since its filtration plants could only take up so much of the brackish water coming from Angat Dam.

"The water from the Angat Dam reservoir has very high sediment deposits because of the heavy rains brought by the typhoons," said Maynilad corporate communications head Jesus Matubis.

"The normal average sediment deposits had exceeded, and we should reduce the water we process to 19,000 million liters per day."

Matubis noted that there is no assurance when the water service disruptions would be lifted as continuing efforts to rehabilitate the Umiray-Angat water tunnel are ongoing.

"We are asking our customers to bear with us because in some areas, the water we deliver is brownish in color," Matubis said.

"But this water is clean, although we recommend that the supply should be filtered and boiled," he added.

Fifty mobile tankers had been mobilized to bring water to the affected areas, according to Matubis.

Concessionaires Manila Water Company Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. made a commitment to finance part of the needed rehabilitation that would clear the debris clogging the water tunnel from Angat Dam.

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Administrator Orlando Hondrade told the INQUIRER that the concessionaires managing the east and west water distribution networks of Manila would shoulder part of the needed funds estimated to cost not less than P500 million.

"These are just initial estimates. The two companies and their consultants are also helping in the assessment of the full extent of the damage to the Umiray-Angat water tunnel," Honrade said, adding that both had pledged to give financial and technical assistance.

Angat is the main source of the two water firms that supply water to 10 to 12 million residents of Manila, Quezon City, Mandaluyong, Caloocan, Rizal, Taguig, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Muntinlupa, and parts of Cavite.

"During these extraordinary events, our company and Maynilad have coordinated with the MWSS to share the burden to extend better service to our customers," Manila Water Company Inc. president Antonino T. Aquino said.

Steve Esteban, head of Maynilad's Water Production Department said he expects the water production to return to normal as soon as the turbidity level improves.

Esteban assured the public that the water from its La Mesa Treatment Plants remains safe, saying this is properly chlorinated and processed. Nevertheless, he urged residents to report any instance of smelly or highly discolored water to Maynilad Hotline 1626. *With Tina G. Santos*

Hot logs found on boat

THE COAST Guard intercepted on Monday night a fishing vessel from Palawan that carried suspected illegally cut lumber hidden among containers of fish.

Around 200 pieces of lumber were found on board the F/B Maricris-3 by elements of the PCG's National Capital Region Division and the Philippine Navy. *Leila B. Salaverria*

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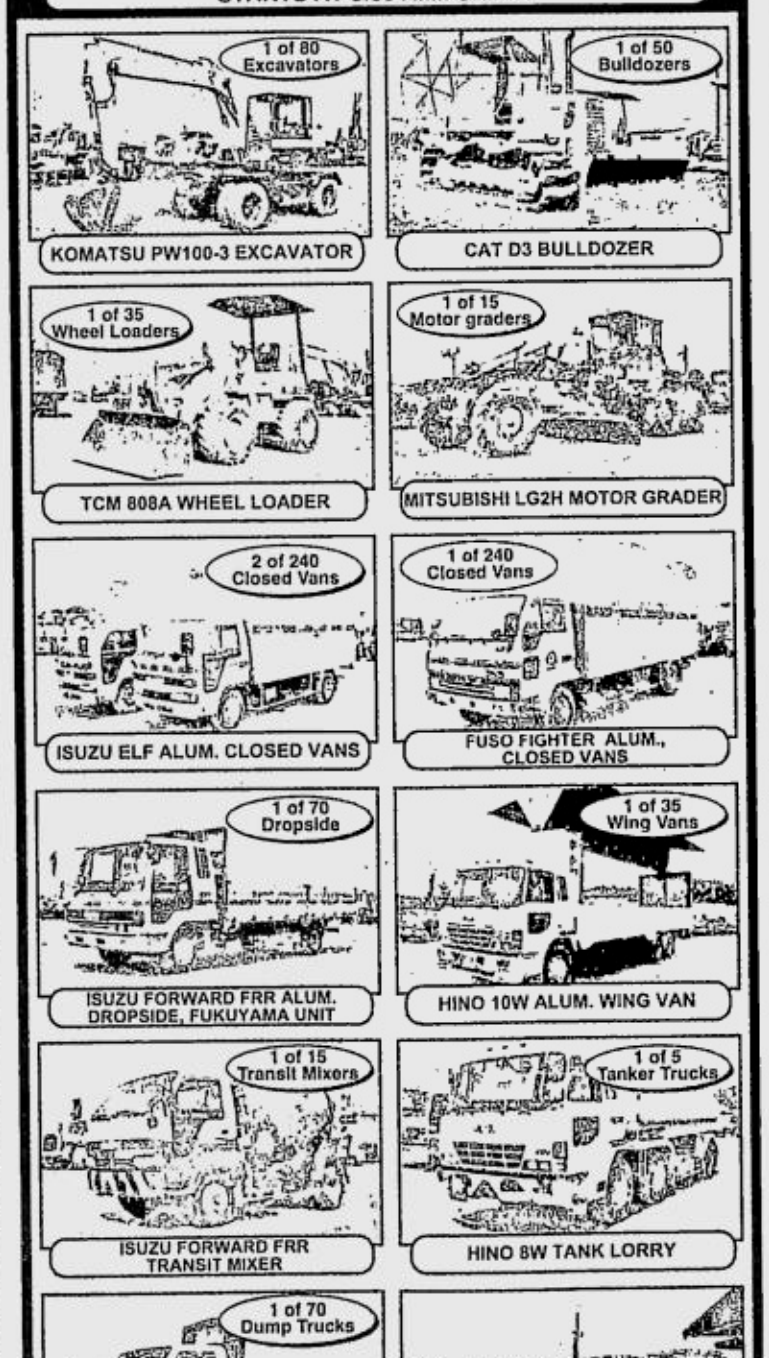

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BASKETBALL: NBA—Hornets vs Bobcats; 8 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Solar Sports—The Hornets pay a visit to their old home, Charlotte, as they take on the expansion Bobcats.
US NCAA-Illinois-Chicago vs Duke; 10 a.m. (r-3:30 p.m.); ESPN—the highly touted Blue Devils face UIC.
Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS TV
Compiled by L. Manguiat

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SPORTS

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Don't miss your favorite TV shows!
Check out today's Inquirer TV Guide in the Entertainment section
Happy Viewing!

Hot Limpot rescues TJ Hotdogs

Strings up four markers as Purefoods thwarts Red Bull Barako uprising

By June Navarro

JUN Limpot scored off two brilliant plays in the final minute to lift the Purefoods TJ Hotdogs past the Red Bull Barako, 92-88, last night.

STANDINGS	W	L
Talk 'N Text	11	4
Ginebra	10	5
Shell	10	6
Purefoods	8	8
SM Beer	7	8
Alaska	7	9
Coca-Cola	7	9
Sta. Lucia	5	9
FedEx	5	9
Red Bull	6	9

GAMES TODAY
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:30 p.m.—Talk N Text vs Shell
7:20 p.m.—FedEx vs Sta. Lucia Realty

Limpot canned a short-range floater and sank two pressure-packed free-throws to snuff the life out of the rampaging Barako in the thrilling Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup encounter at the San Sebastian Recoletos gym in Cavite City.

The victory was the TJ Hotdogs' eighth in 16 outings.

The Barako never led although they managed to come back from 18 points down to provide some scary moments for the TJ Hotdogs in the final minutes of the out-of-town game sponsored by Lactovitale.

Enrico Villanueva scored at low post and Lordy Tugade drilled in a jumper to move the Barako close at 86-90, before Limpot converted his charities and Purefoods' tight defense in the dying seconds derailed Red Bull's final offensive.

With the win, the TJ Hotdogs moved to solo fourth at 8-8, while the Barako absorbed their seventh defeat in 15 games.

The Barako started real cold, going scoreless for more than seven minutes after converting their first basket 39 seconds after tip-off.

By the time Lordy Tugade broke the Barako's silence, the TJ Hotdogs had already moved out-front, 16-4.

Red Bull actually committed 14 turnovers during that lethargic stretch—a league record—as they trailed 11-22 in the first quarter. The gap ballooned to 25-43 before the half.

Rico Villanueva and Ryan Bernardo, however, asserted themselves in the shaded area, and the Barako slowly chipped away at the double-digit deficit to come within 59-65.

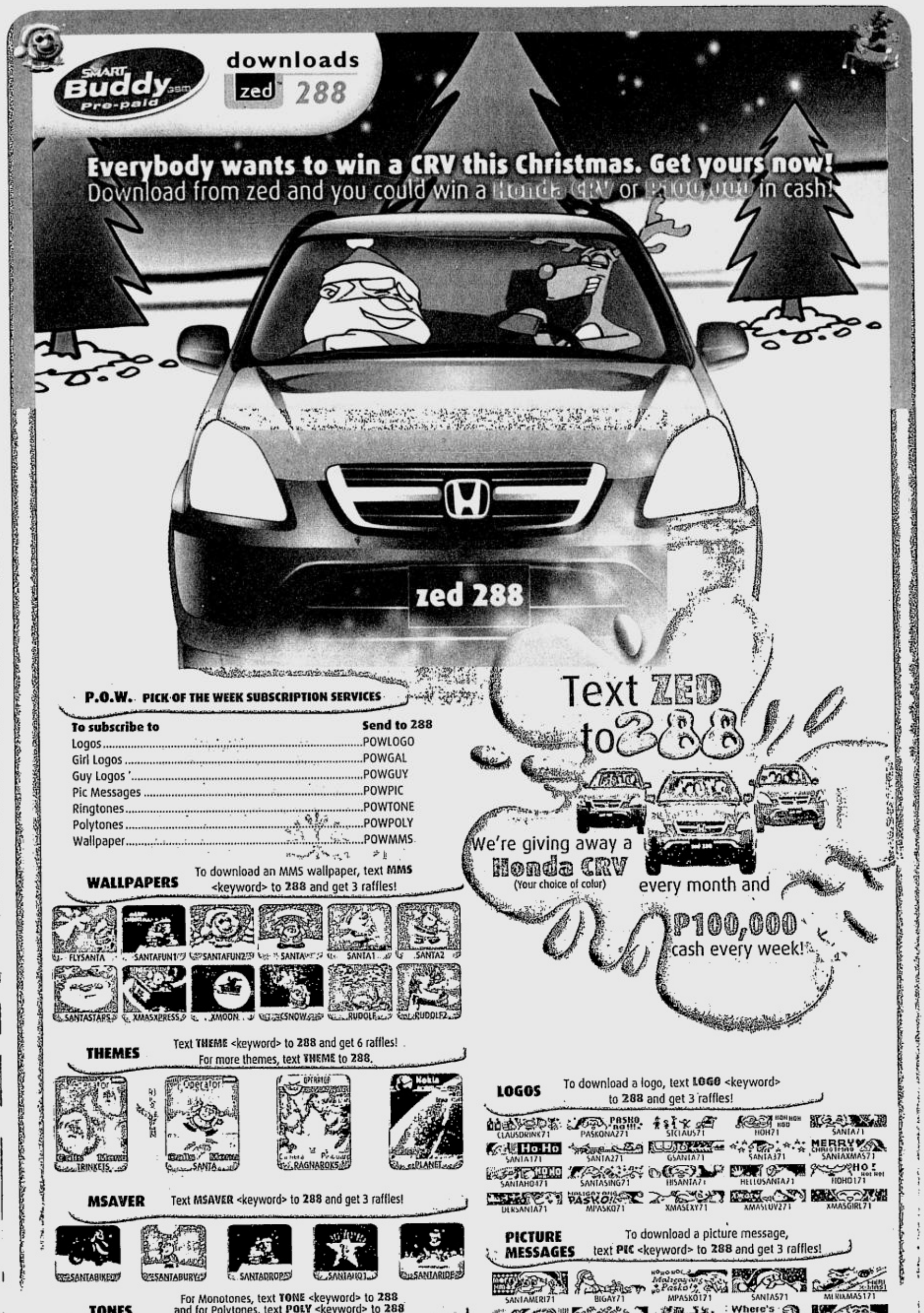
Tension flared late in the final quarter when Tonyboy Espinosa and Jimwell Torion were slapped with a technical foul each after Espinosa made a second motion and Torion nudged the arm of referee Boy Cruz.

The scores:

PUREFOODS 92—Castillo 19, Evangelista 15, Yee 12, Limpot 10, Espinosa 9, Raymundo 7, Laure 6, Artadi 6, Yap 6, Simon 3, Hrabak 0.

RED BULL 88—Villanueva 23, Tugade 18, Asaytono 16, Bernardo 9, Robinson 6, Torion 6, Baguio 5, Lopez 3, Rodriguez 2, Alvarez 0.

Quarters: 22-11, 45-32, 67-60, 92-88



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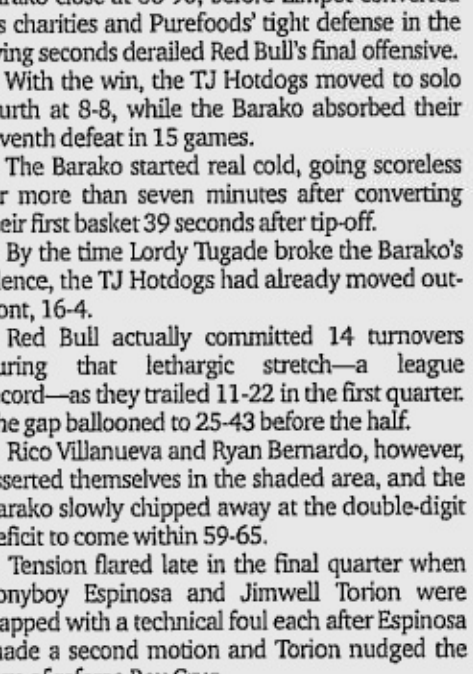
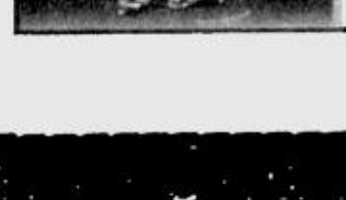


■ **Nokors foil Blu Girls' final 4 bid in thriller** /A26

■ **Jenny searches for her old hero** /A27

■ **Villaroman wins ITT shoot-out** /A28

■ **Shaq lifts Heat past Wizards** /A30



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Lyceum tossers pin fourth loss on SSC

GAMES TOMORROW (*Rizal Coliseum*)
3 p.m.—La Salle vs PSC
5 p.m.—UST vs FEU

LYCEUM, with Michelle Laborte and Cristina Salak on the firing end, subdued San Sebastian College, 25-12, 19-25, 25-15, 25-18, yesterday to notch its second straight victory after back-to-back losses in the Shakey's V-League second conference at the Rizal Coliseum.

Laborte and Salak combined for 32 points as the Lady Pirates dominated their rivals in the third and fourth sets to claim victory in one hour and 46 minutes.

Ma. Angelica Bigcas also came off the bench to score 11 points as Lyceum gained a share of fourth place with Letran, which was playing fancied Philippine Sports Commission at presstime.

Lyceum likewise lorded it over the net in defense, churning out 14 points on blocks with Salak accounting for half of them.

Laborte, though, emerged the best scorer for the team with 18 points on 64 attempts.

The loss was SSC's fourth straight in the tournament sponsored by Shakey's Pizza and organized by Sports Vision Management Group Inc.

Angela Descalsota took the cudgels for the Lady Stags in the early going but failed to draw support from the rest of the team as only Jennifer Bohawe stepped up to toss in 16 points for the quad.

The Lady Pirates hinted of things to come when they took the first set with relative ease, 25-12.

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Nokors foil Blu Girls' final 4 bid in thriller

IN A well-fought game that needed three extra innings to settle, North Korea downed the Philippines, 5-3, to virtually eliminate the Blu Girls from the semifinal race yesterday in the eighth Asian women's softball tournament at the Rizal Memorial ballpark.

GAMES TODAY (*Rizal ballpark*)
8 a.m.—Taiwan vs Singapore
10 a.m.—North Korea vs Thailand
12 noon—Hong Kong vs India
2 p.m.—Indonesia vs Malaysia
4 p.m.—Japan vs South Korea
6 p.m.—China vs Philippines

The vastly improved North Koreans erupted for four runs on five hits in the 10th inning off Blu Girls' starter Diona Macasu to salvage the victory on a hot, windless afternoon before a crowd of 2,000.

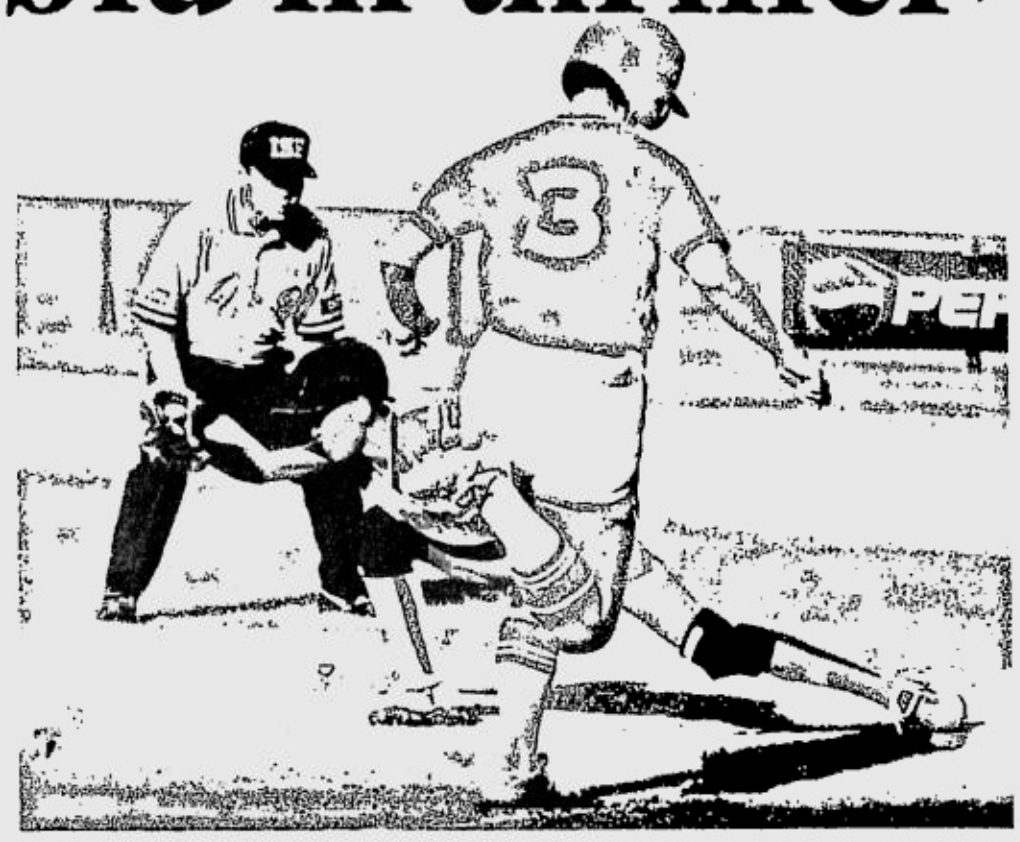
The Koreans clinched their second win in three games in a tie with the Blu Girls, who now face the tough task of beating defending titlist and powerhouse China today to stay alive in the race for the second semifinal slot in Group B.

In order to advance, the Blu Girls need to beat the Chinese and pray that Indonesia defeats North Korea in one of the six games set tomorrow in this tournament serving as the Asian eliminations for the world championship in 2006 in Beijing.

The Blu Girls gave the North Koreans a whale of a fight for nine innings until that fateful 10th inning during which starting pitcher Diona Macasu lost her touch after nine solid innings.

In a last-ditch effort to turn the game around, the Blu Girls scored two runs in their turn at bat in the 10th, but Korean Kim Yun Sim heroically pitched herself out of trouble.

After Emily Tayag reached second, Elaine Caladiao flied out to short but Nimfa Baral sent Tayag scooting for home with a scorching double to leftfield for the Blu Girls' second run in the game and first in the inning.



BLU Girl Gina Salvador stretches to put out North Korea's Ju Ki-mun at first base. JESS YUSON

Baral made it 3-5, thanks to Gina Salvador who singled to center with one out. This time, the crowd started to entertain thoughts of a complete comeback by the Filipinos.

But it did not come.

Kim forced Macasu to ground out to short and ended her stint in grand fashion by striking out Nelia Lara on four pitches.

The Koreans tagged Macasu for nine hits, including five in the 10th inning. Macasu gave way to Maria Corazon Soberre after that four-run binge.

"*Sayang, kayang talunin, per medyo minalas sa tawag* (Tough luck, we could have beat them if not for some bad calls)," said Blu Girls' coach Rolly Malaguit, fighting off tears.

One of the Blu Girls' strongest scoring chances came in the lower ninth inning when they loaded the bases with one out, but the Filipinos ran into a double play, ending the threat.

With Chu Ming-hui and Lai Sheng combining for a five-hitter and catcher T.Y. Chi igniting a three-run blast in the third inning, Chinese-Taipei virtually clinched a place in the semifinals by beating South Korea, 3-0, for a 2-1 record in Group A. China paces the group with three wins.

In no-bearing games, Indonesia downed Thailand, 6-1, for a 1-2 record and Singapore defeated Hong Kong, 4-2, to break into the win column after two straight losses.

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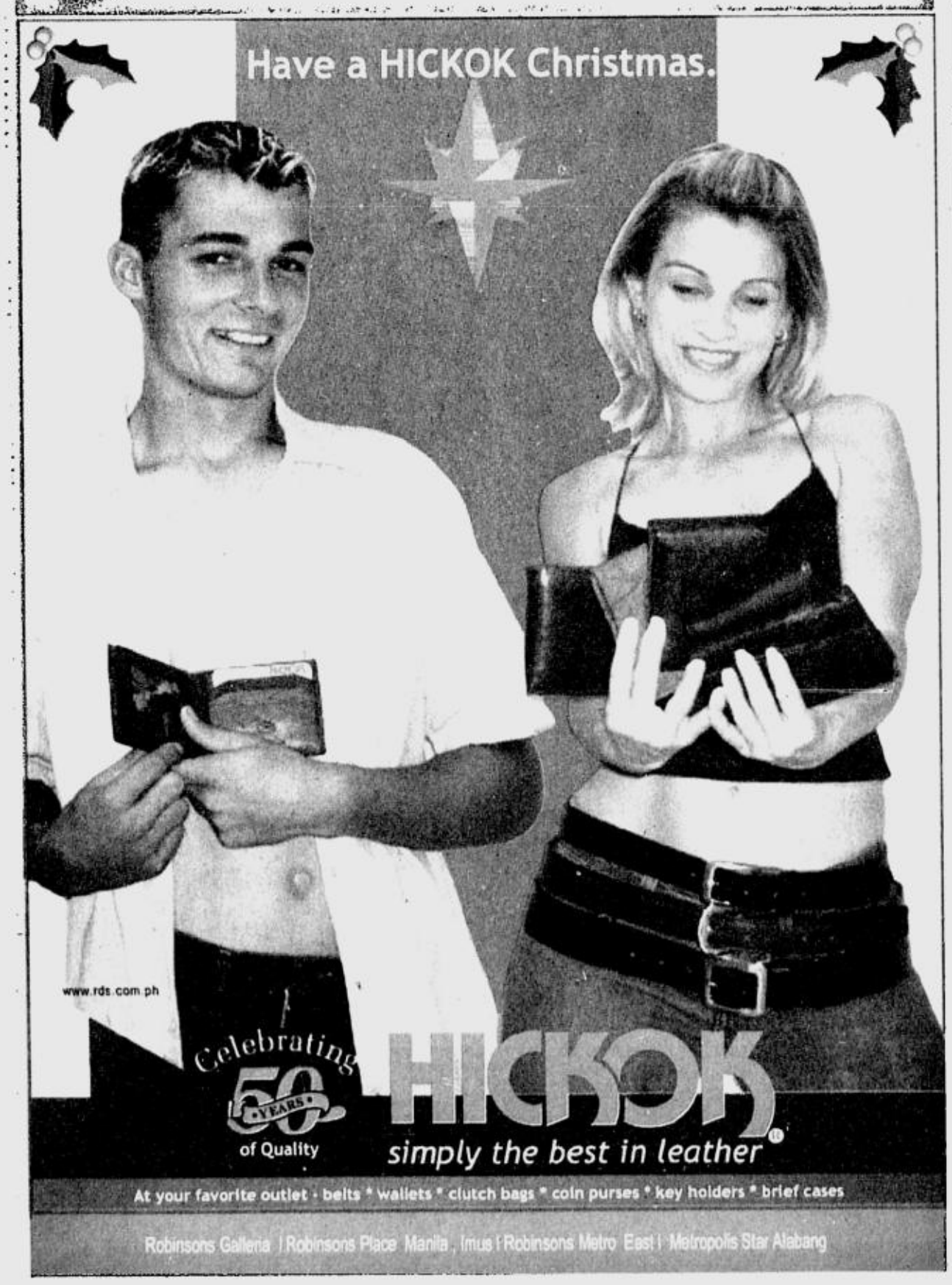

What FPJ had wanted from Pacman

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

KNOWING FPJ, who genuinely cared for his poor countrymen, he would not like to see them grieving.

He had spent the best years of his life trying to bring them hope.

FPJ's heart melted each time he would see a cold, hungry kid out in the streets.

So, listen please.

This one is meant to help ease your grief over the untimely passing of this great gentleman.

FPJ lapsed into a coma on Saturday feeling like a Christmas tree.

You're free to believe that or not.

That could be a bit exaggerated, but based on reports and the testimonies of people around him, FPJ suffered that fatal stroke while celebrating the knockout victory of Manny Pacquiao on Saturday.

He was also in his element, preparing packages for victims of the watery disaster in the provinces of Quezon and Aurora.

***

FPJ must've jumped with joy after Pacquiao had disposed of his Thai foe.

There were unconfirmed reports Pacquiao and FPJ were able to talk on the phone before the great actor collapsed and was rushed to the hospital.

We would try to confirm that with the victorious fighter.

But it's like this: FPJ felt ecstatic because he sincerely felt that Pacquiao's feat had brought instant joy and hope to countless people around him.

As a genuine sports fan, FPJ did swim in the post-fight euphoria.

But above all, the man deeply relished the quick victory because of its happy impact on the lives of poor people.

***

Too bad FPJ never had a chance to witness how things were in the various poorman's places the morning after.

Oh, he must've nodded in genuine delight to see how it was at the wet market, all other haunts of the mob that scratch the earth for a living, on Sunday morning.

There was a distinct holiday lilt out there.

It was sunny, but doubly bright were the smiles on the faces of the small people, the countless poor souls who themselves felt deeply rewarded by Pacquiao's screaming triumph.

Of course, Pacquiao himself knew the far-reaching effects of his effort.

Pacquiao, a onetime construction worker, knew the aspirations of the hungry horde.

He need not ask a psychologist what great goodness he had caused in a country badly wanting in winners.

***

Did FPJ manage to make a last wish to Pacquiao?

That, again, is hard to determine.

But it goes without saying that, whether or not FPJ was able to utter it, he would've asked Pacquiao to be super fit for his next big assignment.

Why? Because Pacquiao no longer fights for himself alone.

Not for fame and fortune only.

But for all his countrymen, mainly the poor.

He must do his utmost best to again stay at peak form.

OK. The Pacman celebrates his birthday Dec. 17.

Former national Tour cycling champ Jess Garcia Jr. celebrates his the following day.

But take it from Cycling Jess: If it's not asking too much, Pacquiao could try and dedicate his next fight to the memory of FPJ.

***

In order to do this, Pacman should now avoid short cuts.

He could do this by reporting to the Wild Card Boxing Club of Freddie Roach ahead of the original schedule.

He could try and cut short his holidays, fly to the US the day after Christmas.

Pacquiao must bear in mind that he would again be facing Juan Manuel Marquez, a fitness freak who managed to give him hell after he had downed the sweet-punching Mexican three times in the first round.

If Pacman manages to do all these, he would be aptly honoring FPJ, whose lifetime motto had always been: Give all your best for your poor countrymen.

Anyway, if FPJ had had any regret about the last presidential election, it was only one thing: his failure to fight his own fight and save the country from monstrous corruption and decay.

Goodbye, Manager.

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Jenny searches for her old hero

JENNIFER Rosales says watching brother Gerald struggle pains her. Jenny is featured in the upcoming glossy issue of the INQUIRER Golf Monthly. ERNIE SARMIENTO

By Francis Ochoa

COMING home from her biggest season in the LPGA, Jennifer Rosales continues to search for the one thing she can't find among her list of achievements and her multimillion earnings: The hero she once knew.

And the country's golf sensation knows he's still out there.

"I grew up idolizing my brother," said Rosales, talking about Gerald Rosales.

While Jenny has been doing well in the LPGA, pulling off her breakthrough victory this season, Gerald has been struggling in the Asian Tour, missing the cut in its last tournament and losing his Tour card in the process.

But Jenny knows that deep within the dusky Gerald's slumping game is the heart and skill of the golfer she grew up adoring. In fact, she has her own way of coaxing the old Gerald to crawl out of his present rut.

"Instead of babying him, I give him crap," said Rosales.

"If I put myself in his shoes, I don't want people to come to me and say 'Oh Jenny, it's okay.'

"If I sucked, I sucked. You cannot say anything that will make a loss better. So I'd rather you take me down and tell me straight up that I played bad."

Lately, that is what she's been telling her brother.

"There's always a reason when things like these happen," she said. "Maybe some of the things he's been doing aren't working. Maybe he needs to change some things."

The fact that Rosales loves her brother to death and that she had always looked up to him when they were kids has made watching Gerald's struggles even more painful.

That's because she fully understands what Gerald is going through right now.

After all, there was a time when they had opposite roles. When Gerald's career was prospering with a victory in the Philippine Open, Jenny was struggling to crawl out of Filipina-American Dorothy Delasin's shadow in the LPGA.

"When I struggled a few years back, he gave me crap," said Jenny of Gerald. "And I thanked him for doing that.

"He doesn't baby me either. We're the only ones who understand each other when it comes to golf. We're the only ones who play. My mom doesn't play, my sister doesn't play. We're the only ones who know what's really going through our minds."

Right now, Jenny knows what's going through Gerald's mind.

"He's really thinking about a lot of things right now," she said. "Plus, he's got his family to worry about."

But Jenny knows she'll find her hero again soon. And even though Gerald needs to go through qualifying school to get back his Asian Tour playing privilege, Jenny knows her hero will come to fore when it matters the most.

"He's got so much talent and I really want him to do well," she said. "I don't know what's going on, but he's a tough guy. He's a fighter."

Executive council tackles SEAG, committees today

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE CREATION of working committees for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games is tops on the agenda when the new Philippine Olympic Committee executive council convenes for the first time today.

Philipine Olympic Committee president-elect Jose "Peping" Cojuangco will preside over the meeting to be held at his residence in Makati and will tackle, among other things, the creation of committees to "set the POC in a running start for next year."

POC first vice president Rep. Monico Puentevella said the composition of working committees like the membership, ways and means, finance and arbitration committees will be given priority.

"We want to start the year already in full operation," said Puentevella, who is expected to be named chair of the powerful membership committee, which decides which among the 40-plus NSAs deserve to have full POC membership.

Last week, athletics and chess president Go Teng Kok appealed to the membership committee to check on the performance of the NSAs during the past international events and make it a gauge of each NSA's worthiness considering that they are getting money from the Philippine Sports Commission.

Puentevella said SEA Games Organizing Committee chair Obet Pagdanganan is also set to join the meeting to update the POC executive council on the country's preparation for the biennial event.

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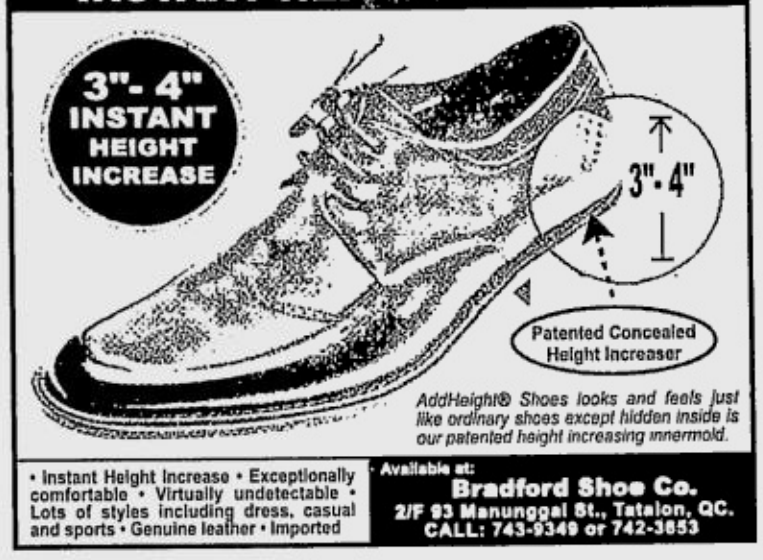

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Arcilla brothers, Victorino advance

BAGUIO CITY—Top seed Johnny Arcilla was all business, trouncing local bet Marvelous Cortez, 6-1, 6-0, yesterday to advance to the round of 16 in the Baguio Tennis Open at the Baguio Tennis Club shell courts in Burnham Park.

Second-ranked Joseph Victorino joined Arcilla in the next round by trouncing top Baguio bet Jetjet Tangalin, 6-3, 6-3, at the Baguio Country Club courts.

To Arcilla's brother, Joseph, belonged the distinction of gaining the quarterfinals first following back-to-back victories yesterday.

Joseph downed Arcie Mano, 6-3, 6-3, in the round of 16 to join Elbert Anasta in the next round.

Anasta didn't have to lift his racquet to make the last eight after his opponents Gilbert Estrada and Joemar Tolentino failed to show up.

Also gaining the last 16 of the richest tournament outside Metro Manila were third seed Rolando Ruel, Cienil Mantilla, Adelo Abadia, Leo Laping, Jordan Villanueva and Jo Boado.

Ruel whipped Jan Rick de Castro, 6-2, 6-3, at BTC, Mantilla yielded only two games to rout Ric Tanlasigui, 6-2, 6-0; the No. 5 Abadia slipped past Rolando Ruel's brother, Arvin, 7-5, 6-4; Laping defeated Jovan Divinagracia, 6-3, 7-5; Villanueva overpowered Carlo Arguelles, 6-3, 6-1, and Boado came from behind to beat Conrad Amita, 4-6, 6-3, 5-0 (retired).

The lion's purse of P40,000 from the P240,000 prize pot will go to each of the winners of the singles and doubles events. The runners-up settle for P20,000. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Feverish Ortiguerra powers Welcoat; Archers nip Eagles

GAMES TOMORROW (*Letran Gym*)
2 p.m.—AMP-Ateneo vs Magnolia-FEU
4 p.m.—Air Philippines vs Toyota Otis-Letran

By Jasmine W. Payo

NOT EVEN a fever could slow down Welcoat forward Marvin Ortiguerra.

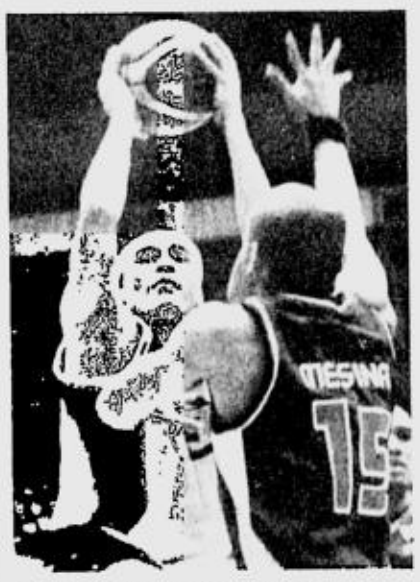
Ortiguerra added to Granny Goose's woes as he drilled in 22 points to lead the Paint Masters to a 75-65 victory yesterday over the slumping Tortillos in the PBL Open Championship at the Makati Coliseum.

"Marvin and Chester (Tolomia) were sick but they wanted to play," said coach Caloy Garcia. "We played better now. We were passing the ball more and everybody stepped up."

Ortiguerra shot 12 points beyond the arc and controlled the offense along with 6-foot-7 rookie Anthony Washington, who had 16 points and 12 boards.

"At least we're done with all the top teams now," added Garcia after Welcoat moved up to third place at 6-5. "But we'll still continue to work on our game."

After finishing the first round on top at 6-1, Granny Goose absorbed its fourth straight loss and shared third spot with Welcoat.



MAC Cardona of ICTSI shoots off Jenkins Mesina of AMP. BETOY JOHNSON

In the second game, ICTSI-La Salle's tight defense in the closing seconds allowed the Archers to scrape past AMP-Ateneo, 77-76.

The Archers held on for a one-point win as Mac Cardona and Junjun Cabatu ganged up on Emerson Oreta to foil the Eagles' potential winning basket.

Guards Ryan Araña and TY Tang finally stepped up offensively for the Archers, combining for 36 points.

"We'll use this break to set the energy in our next games," said interim coach Gee Abanilla after the Archers jumped to fifth place at 5-6.

Ortiguerra's steady play paved the way for an 18-point Welcoat lead, 50-32. The 6-foot-4 forward later teamed up with Washington to keep the Paint Masters comfortably ahead by the end of the third period, 61-44.

The scores:

First Game

WELCOAT 75—Ortiguerra 22, Washington 16, Sta. Maria 8, Reyes 7, Gamboa 6, Dy 4, Dulay 3, Guevarra 2, Coching 2, Tolomia 0.

GRANNY GOOSE 65—Quiñahan 14, Cruz 10, Almeda 9, David 8, Laneta 7, Grijaldo 5, Capati 4, Larong 4, Ibañes 2, Latonio 1, Santos 1, Cervantes 0, Concha 0.

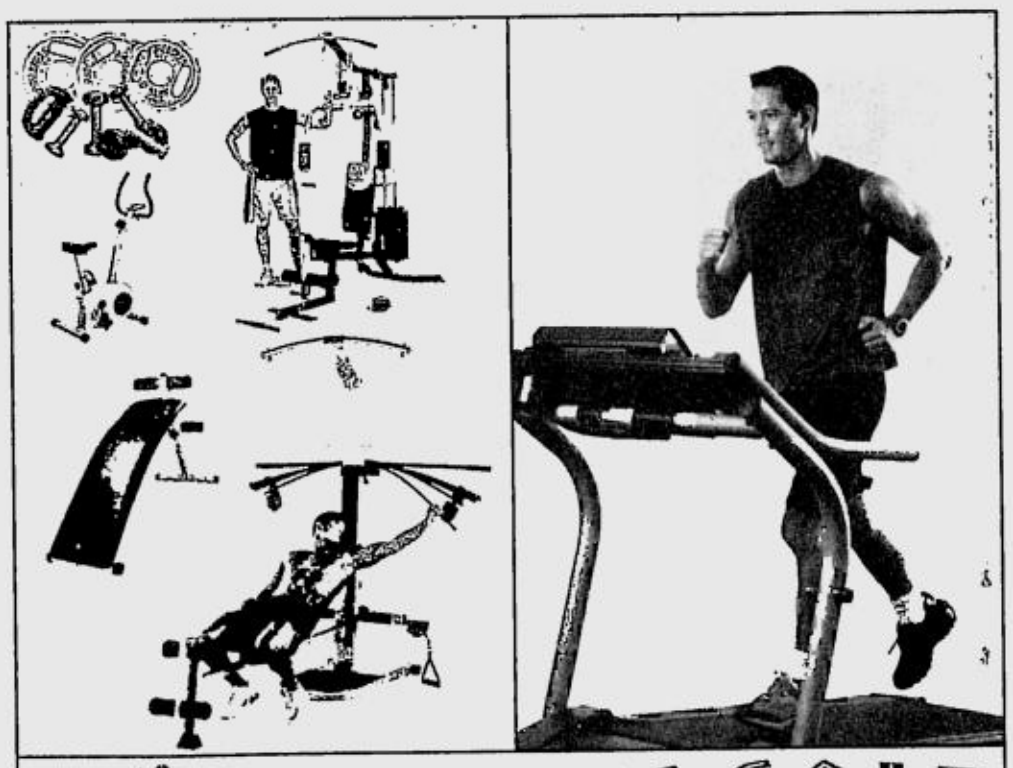
Quarters: 17-17, 42-31, 61-44, 75-65.

Second Game

ICTSI-LA SALLE 77—Araña 19, Tang 17, Cardona 15, Cabatu 8, Casio 8, Gaco 4, Yeo 4, Benitez 2, Walsham 0.

AMP-ATENEO 76—Oreta 26, Mesina 12, Intal 12, Membrere 9, Tenorio 5, Bugia 4, Del Rosario 3, Mendoza 3, Alfad 2, Gatumbato 0, Castro 0.

Quarters: 29-20, 43-36, 62-55, 77-76.



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SPORTSWATCH

So rules Mayor Fernando active chess

WHIZ kid Wesley So went undefeated in seven rounds to rule the 5th Alay Kay Mayor Marides Carlos Fernando 2050 and below active chess non-master tournament Sunday at the Marikina Sports Center in Marikina City. The 11-year-old So gathered 6.5 points to bag the crown and the P5,000 top purse in the tournament organized by Marikina Chess Federation chair Johnny "Joel" Gaudia and tournament arbiter NM Rudy Ibañez. Half a point behind were Jerry Areque, Richard Dela Cruz and Nelson Villanueva. Sharing fifth to eighth places with 5.5 points each were Dino Ballecer, Rainier De Guzman, Ervil Villa and Leoncio Mauleon. The category winners were Jan Jodalyn Fronda (top lady), Jan Vincent Paragua (top junior), Wesley So and Jude Emil Fronda (top kiddy), Malvin Dulay and Michael Angeles (top Marikina kiddies), Leoncio Mauleon (top senior) and Danilo Azucena, Vernon Delavega and Nelson Mendoza (top Marikina player).

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Dalumpines conquers fellow veterans

MICHAEL Dalumpines upset 1982 national champion Richard Ching, 4-1, on Sunday to conquer the first ever Battle of the Veterans Reunion of the Champions table tennis at the Rancho Table Tennis Club in Marikina City. Twenty-nine-year-old Dalumpines, a national junior champion in 1993, relied on his backhand spin to score a convincing 11-8, 11-9, 11-13, 11-9, 11-7 win against Ching and take the P10,000 cash prize plus trophy. Before the finals of the one-day tournament organized by Ric Chua and supported by the Filipino-American Table Tennis Association, Dalumpines defeated former national team captain Julius Esposo, 11-3, 5-11, 14-12, 7-11, 11-9, to occupy the first final spot. Ching, on the other hand, vanquished current women national head coach Lauro Crisostomo, 8-11, 11-8, 12-10, 11-7, in the semifinals.

Filipinos clinch 2 sepak takraw medals

BANGKOK—The Philippine team won two medals—a silver and a bronze—yesterday in the 19th King's Cup Sepak Takraw World Championship here. Composed of Harrison Castanares, Danilo Alipan, Michael Jose, Metodio Suico, Hector Memorion and Marbie Quirante, the RP squad scored 310 points to finish second to Thailand, which compiled 370, in the Hoop Takraw competition, a new event that will be played in the Indoor Asian Games here in November 2005. Alipan, Jolly Aglubo and Suico combined to take the bronze in the Double Regu event. Thailand A bagged the gold, while Thailand B took the silver. Team manager Col. Romarico Calderon Sr. praised the Filipinos, who were coached by Vicente Luad Jr. and Hector Sentillas.

Pasko sa Pasay 4-cocker gets going

THE SHOWDOWN of Metro Manila and provincial derby champions continue today as the second round eliminations of Pasko Sa Pasay 4-Cock Derby' gets going at the air-conditioned Pasay City Cockpit beginning at 5 p.m. The event, being hosted by PCC management, will be supported by Sagupaan Complexor 3000, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Mite Free. From a field of 63 participants, 12 posted two wins each in Monday's initial round. They were Jess Bautista (Final Questor I and II), Pepito Ngo (Fatman Sa Pasay March), Boyet Legazpi (NB Bubukal), M. Panoy (Happy Birthday Idol), Otic Hizon (St. Valentine), Ronnie Bryan (Ronnie Bryan), Roming Vergara (Noche Buena), Roming Santos (RRS Plaridel), Raffy Alado (Grosby Jerusalem), Alvin John (Hi Manong) and Pamasko Namin PCC entry. About 75 new participants are competing in today's second round eliminations.

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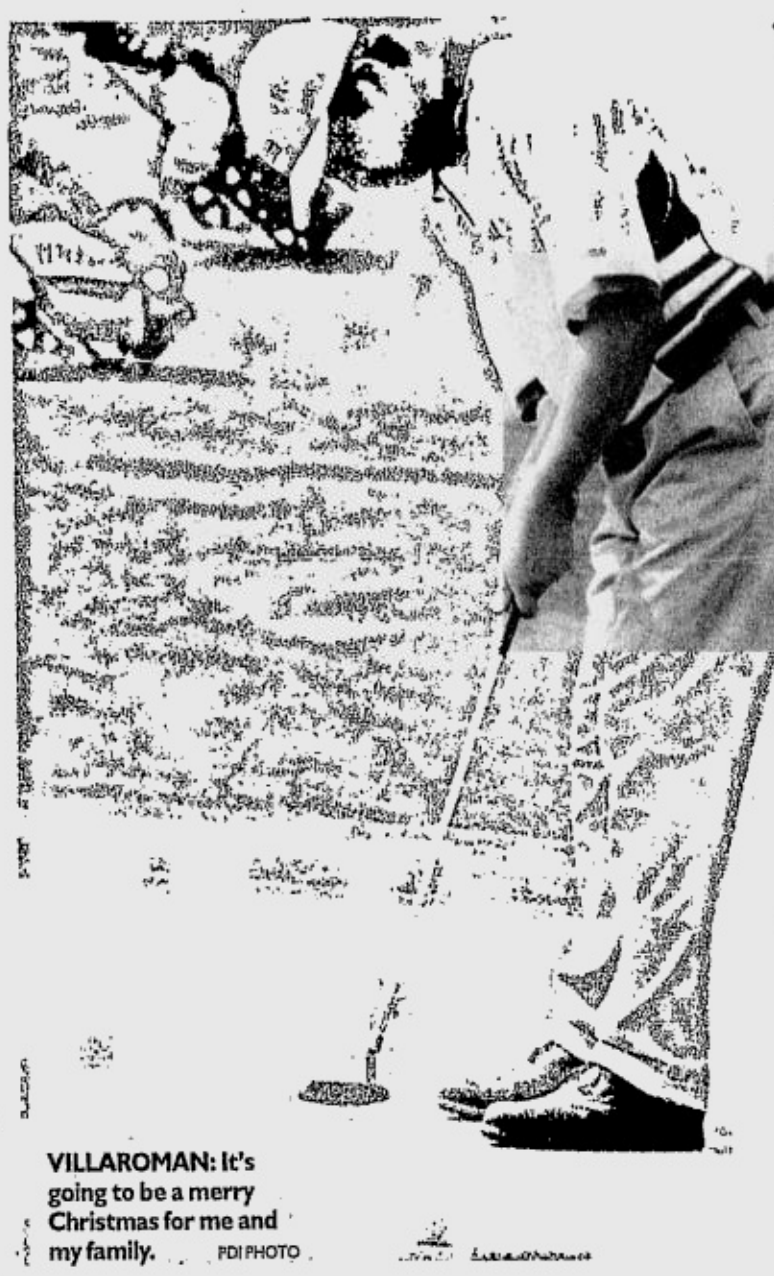
Race 3—1. Quant Je Puis 2. Hello Mushi 3. Art's Memory
Race 4—1. JJ's Friend 2. Ahead of Time 3. Paslit 4. Lucky Fil 5. Spoiler
Race 5—1. Ghurka 2. Joker 3. Striker 4. Sambal
Race 6—1. Conglomerate 2. I Don't Dance 3 Tribeca 4. Habagat 5. Big Bucks 6. Ground Wave
Race 7—1. Sovereign Queen 2. Amazing Firenze 3. Mr. Bonjing 4. Archer
Race 8—1. Air Force One 2. Legally Blonde 3. Man Power 4. Beautiful Task 5. Prince Valiant 6. Ocean Cookie



VILLAROMAN: It's going to be a merry Christmas for me and my family. PDI PHOTO

Villaroman

By Musong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG—Carito Villaroman prevailed in a down-the-wire shootout with Richard Sinfuego yesterday, nailing birdies on the last two holes for a four-under 68 and a three-shot victory in the first Ideal Travel and Tours Invitational Pro-Am.

The 35-year-old former world junior golf champion, whose last taste of victory came in 1997, almost blew a two-shot lead and needed a stroke of brilliant putting to hold off Sinfuego P50,000 top prize.

Villaroman nailed a difficu sidehill putt on the 17th and roll birdie on the par-5 18th for a nine under par at the north and outs of Canlubang Golf and Co here.

Sinfuego caught up with Villa overnight leader, with a birdie o hole and a par on the next as th winner tripped on back-to-back missed taking the lead outrig four-footer for birdie on the 1 out.

Still, Sinfuego, a last-minute

PSC, foreign affairs support Para Games

THE PHILIPPINE Sports Commission and the Asean desk of the Department of Foreign Affairs have expressed their full support to the 3rd Asean Para Games set on Dec. 12-21, next year in Manila.

"No less than President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has given her blessing to the games," PSC chair Eric Buhain said yesterday during the formal launching of the event at the Manila Pavilion Hotel.

The presentation of the logo and the official mascot, Buboy Butanding, the whale shark, highlighted the program.

Asean Para Sports Federation president Zainal Abu Zarin, DFA assistant secretary and Asean-Philippines director general Susan Castrence, Organizing Committee chair and PSC Commissioner Michael Barredo, Philspada's Luis de Arellano, Manila Sports Council chair Ali Atienza and APSF's Emmanuel Penson were also present.

Deen opens 2-shot lead over Almario

CEBU—Eric Deen bucked a double-bogey on the fourth hole with a two-over-par 74 yesterday to move up two shots over archrival Carl Almario in the opening round of the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour at the exclusive Cebu Country Club here.

Deen recovered from that early mistake to shoot two birdies on the seventh and 10th that made up for bogeys on Nos. 8 and 12 as he kicked off his bid for a record third straight crown in the 72-hole men's championship class.

Almario was in the lead until he collapsed with three consecutive bogeys from the 13th but seems bent on giving Deen a tough time in the tourney serving as the seventh and final qualifying leg for the national grand finals next year.

Almario shot a 75 with birdies on the sixth, 11th and 12th against a bogey on the third and a double-bogey on the second.

Ferdinand Mondares was running third with a 76 while Lino Retuerto, son of noted swing coach Roger, and Mark Anthony Dy were tied at 78. Tristan Tabanas, one of the frontliners of PAL Interclub champ Del Monte, fell nine shots behind after an opening 81.

The six entries are all aiming to join an elite group of qualifiers for the finals set on Feb. 8-11 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club that includes Juvic Pagunsan, Jun Bernis, Jay Bayron, Boyet Saragoza, Raymund Sangil and Korean Kim Chang-hoi.

The Samsung Tour is also sponsored by Tokyo Tokyo, C-Lium Fiber, Gatorade, Philippine Airlines, adidas Taylor Made, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Pink Patio Boracay, Coppertone Sport, and Rogin E. Killer-Bee, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite are media partners.

About 140 players plunge into action tomorrow for the 36-hole competitions in the various handicap divisions where national team standout Jayvic Agojo is entered in Class A with trophies and appliances at stake for the winners.

Agojo, who will be making her maiden participation in the Samsung Tour, will be challenged by World Amateur teammate Anya Tanpinco of Bacolod.

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went on to shoot a second straight 69 despite a bogey on 18 to be at 138, good for the P30,000 runner-up's purse.

Antonio Lascuña, tied for second at the start of the day with Sinfuego and Mars Pucay, salvaged a 70 despite two bogeys in the back nine for a third-best 139 and P20,000.

Juvic Pagunsan carded a 71 for a 139 total, holding off Canlubang teammate Boyet Saragoza for the amateur title and the luxury cruise prize that goes with it.

Journeyman Rey Alit struggled with a 79 but still won the Senior title by three shots with a 151 tally over a charging Felix Fernando. Alit won P35,000.

Fernando assembled the best round of the day among the players 50 years old and above, a 75 which had him vaulting from fourth to second place worth P20,000.

National swing coach Roger Retuerto steadied himself from a double bogey-bogey start to shoot a 78 and finish third. He won P12,500.

"It's going to be a merry Christmas for me and my family," said Villaroman, who is sponsored by Callaway. "It was a highly intense duel and coming out on top of something like that is worth a million bucks."

Deadlocked with two holes left, Villaroman hit a six-iron 20 feet past the flag on the 174-yard 17th. He made the putt to go 1-up.

He could have played safe on the last hole to protect his slim lead but opted not to.

After hitting 3-wood off the 18th tee, Villaroman went for the green in two, a 260-yard effort that landed on the fringe pinhigh, sealing the outcome.

Cookie La'O and burly Robert Pactolerin had identical 69s and finished joint fourth with 141 tallies, one ahead of Pucay, who shot a 73.

Armando Eso (72), Ruben Sasutil (76) and Edwin Estrera (76) tied for fourth at 147, one ahead of Benjie Magada, who scrambled for a 73.

Bautista to risk title

AFRICAN Vuyisile Bebe has stepped forward to challenge teenage boxing sensation Rey "Boom-Boom" Bautista in his first WBO Asia Pacific bantam defense set Jan. 29 at the air-conditioned Mandaue City Cultural and Sports Complex in Cebu.

The rugged, iron-jawed Bebe has been picked by promoter Sammy "Don King" Gello-ani to test the mettle of the 18-year-old Bautista.

Bebe, a short and stocky 28-year-old ring gladiator, parades a record of 20 fights with 15-5 win-loss record, including 6 KOs.

"I have seen Bebe fight and he is a dangerous opponent, said Gello-ani.

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BMW 530d Exec. 2004 Black Sapphire, 1,120km. P4,650,000	**BMW 318i Exec.** 2004 Black Sapphire, 2,320km, P2,150,000	**BMW 316i** 2004 Titanium Silver, 9,222km, P1,480,000
BMW 325i Exec. 2004 Titanium Silver, 14,126km, P2,500,000	**BMW 318i Exec.** 2004 Steel Gray, 5,000km, P2,150,000	**BMW 316i** 2003 Titanium Silver, 18,000km, P1,450,000

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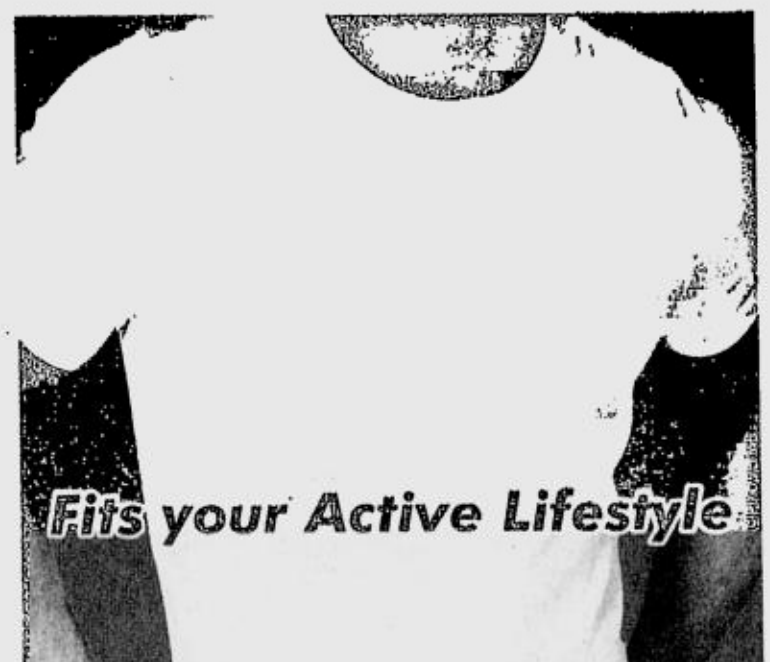

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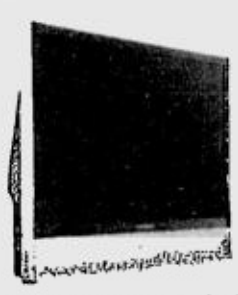

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5TH WIN IN ROW

Shaq lifts Heat past Wizards

NEW YORK—Shaquille O'Neal scored a season-high 40 points and added 12 rebounds and five blocked shots to drive the host Miami Heat past the Washington Wizards, 106-83, Monday.

• The Heat lost leading scorer Dwyane Wade with a sprained left ankle late in the first half, although the team said his absence was simply a precautionary measure.

O'Neal made up for the loss of Wade, notching 15 of his points in the final quarter as Miami won its fifth straight game, and seventh in a row against the Wizards.

Rasual Butler added 16 points as the Heat held the Wizards to 32 points in the first half, a season-low for Washington.

Butler also tied a career high with seven rebounds.

Eddie Jones claimed 14 points and Damon Jones contributed 12 points and nine rebounds.

Gilbert Arenas picked up 18 points for the Wizards, who lost for only the third time in 12 outings.

Kwame Brown added 16 points for Washington, which had been averaging 102.1 points per game.

In Memphis, LeBron James collected 31 points as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Grizzlies, 92-86.

James added eight assists and seven steals for the Cavs, who received an 18-point performance from Jeff McInnis. Zydrunas Ilgauskas had 11 points and 11 rebounds.

Pau Gasol led Memphis with 19 points while Lorenzen Wright totaled 16 points and 10 rebounds.

Mavericks 94, Bulls 93

In Chicago, Michael Finley scored 27 points as the Dallas Mavericks rallied to edge the Bulls, 94-93.

Dirk Nowitzki added 21 points and nine rebounds for the Mavs while Josh Howard had 16 points and 10 rebounds.

Eddy Curry led Chicago with 20 points and Tyson Chandler had 12 points and 11 rebounds.

In Phoenix, Quentin Richardson poured in 26 points as the Suns improved to 18-3 with a 121-100 rout of the Orlando Magic.

Shawn Marion added 19 points and 10 rebounds while Amare Stoudemire had 21 points and Leandro Barbosa 19. Grant Hill's 23 points led Orlando.

In Los Angeles, Ricky Davis amassed 34 points as the Boston Celtics finally subdued the Clippers, 134-127, in double overtime.

Paul Pierce added 33 points for the Celtics, who scored 18 points in the second extra period.

Corey Maggette scored 34 points for the Clippers while Elton Brand had 24 points and 18 rebounds.

Pacers sign Curry

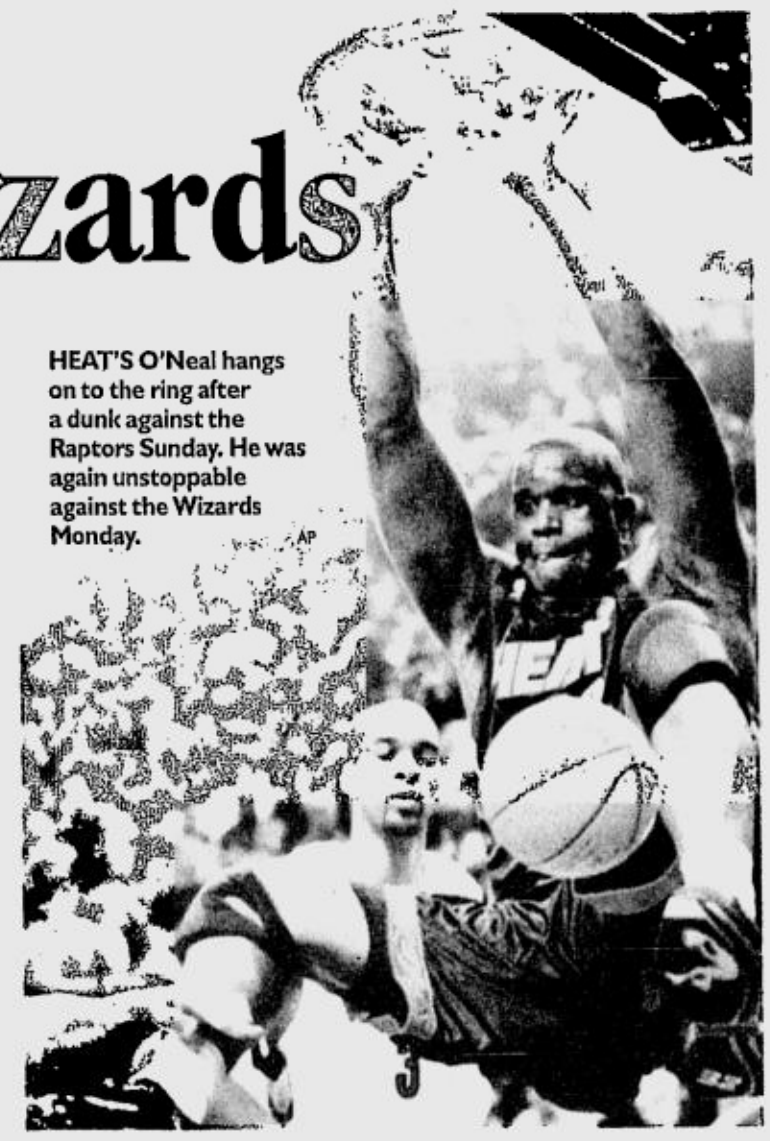
Indiana signed free agent forward Michael Curry on Monday.

Curry, a 10-year veteran, should help the Pacers deal with a roster that has been depleted due to suspensions and injuries. Last season he averaged 2.9 points and 1.2 rebounds in 70 games for Toronto.

The 36-year-old Curry spent three seasons playing for Indiana head coach Rick Carlisle, while with the Detroit Pistons, between 2001-03.

The 6-foot-6 Curry—president of the NBA Players' Association—has also played with Philadelphia, Washington and Milwaukee.

The Pacers, who have lost seven straight, waived Tremaine Fowlkes to make room on the roster for Curry. *Reuters*



HEAT'S O'Neal hangs on to the ring after a dunk against the Raptors Sunday. He was again unstoppable against the Wizards Monday. AP

Jewelers battle Snipers at home

CEBU CITY—What they managed to do on the road, the M. Lhuillier Jewelers would want to repeat at home.

The Jewelers stole Game One of their United Regional Basketball League title series yesterday from the Ilocos Snipers in Ilocos Sur, 80-77, to pull even at 1-1 as the championships shift to the New Cebu City Coliseum for Game Three at 6:30 p.m. today.

With Game Four also slated here tomorrow, the Jewelers are in a position to cut short the best-of-five affair at their home turf and earn the distinction as URBL's inaugural titlist.

M. Lhuillier coach Raul "Yayoy" Alcoseba believes the familiar confines of the Cebu Coliseum should serve them well.

"We will go all out for the win today and tomorrow," said Alcoseba, also a Cebu City councilor. "The players told me they don't want to go back to Ilocos Sur for Game Five and they'll give their best to finish the series here as an early Christmas gift to the Cebuano fans."

The Jewelers swept both matches against the Snipers here in Cebu City, the first on opening day, 78-68, last Sept. 25 and the second during the semifinals, 74-68, last Dec. 3.

Proving that these victories were no fluke, the Jewelers silenced the Ilocanos at the Santo Domingo People's Center on Dec. 10 before yielding Game Two, 85-76, in overtime at the same venue on Dec. 11.

However, Snipers head coach Mario Quitoriano believes they could buck the odds against the Jewelers, saying his players are peaking at the right time.

"The win in Game Two boosted the team's morale and confidence," said Quitoriano. "We hope to carry the momentum and win a game here in order to forge a deciding Game Five."

YELENA ISINBAYEVA soars to one of her record-setting vaults.

YEARENDER

Pole vault star also sings, acts

LONDON—The Black Sea Cossacks choir backed by a full orchestra lent an exotic twist to the Brussels Golden League meeting in the week after the Athens Olympics.

To the delight of a noisy crowd who had enjoyed some splendid athletics, including two world records, the choir were joined on stage by Russian pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva, who belted out an enthusiastic version of her national anthem.

Isinbayeva had set her seventh world record of the year while winning the gold medal in Athens. In Brussels she extended her mark another centimeter to 4.92 meters and picked up another $100,000 bonus.

"I'm just a poor girl from Volgograd," she disarmingly explained to reporters before the start of the Olympic Games.

The women's pole vault is still a fledgling event and Isinbayeva confessed at the season-ending world athletics final that she had already exceeded five meters in training.

After making a fortune in world record bonuses, some of which went toward buying a new car, Isinbayeva was considerably richer at year's end and indisputably the women's athlete of the year.

Her unexpected concert appearance in Brussels reflected her vivacious personality, already clearly apparent when performing in the most theatrically spectacular event on the athletics program.

Athens showcased the old and the new with the core sport of the Games fully living up to its exalted status. It also provided a welcome respite from the Balco scandal, which had threatened to wreck track and field.

A federal investigation into the Californian laboratory, believed to be manufacturing and distributing the previously undetectable designer steroid THG (tetrahydrogestrinone), claimed some high-profile casualties but its tentacles did not spread as wide as originally feared.

However, it clearly affected Marion Jones, winner of three gold medals at the 2000 Sydney Games.

Jones's partner Tim Montgomery, the world 100-meter record holder, was investigated and eventually charged with serious doping violations as a result of the Balco inquiry.

Montgomery failed to make the Games' team and Jones, who was also investigated, qualified for the relay and long jump only, leaving Athens without a medal of any color.

Drugs scandals again scarred the Games, although there is credible evidence that the testers are starting to catch up with the cheats.

Greece's main medal hopes Costas Kenteris, the Sydney 200 meters champion and Katerina Thanou, the 100 silver medalist behind Jones in Sydney, withdrew after missing a scheduled drugs test on the eve of the opening rite. *Reuters*

Shevchenko: Footballer of the Year

ROME—Andriy Shevchenko, who was named as European Footballer of the Year on Monday, has been a revelation since he signed for AC Milan from Dynamo Kiev five years ago.

Combining pace and skill with great accuracy, the 28-year-old Ukrainian striker has scored 102 goals in Serie A, proving his 26 million pound (37.5 million euro) transfer fee was money well spent.

He became the first foreigner to top the scoring charts in a debut season in Italy with 24 goals in 32 matches.

Shevchenko matched that with another 24-goal haul in the following campaign to prove he was no one-season wonder.

His finest moment was scoring the winning spot-kick in the 2003 Champions League final penalty shoot-out against Juventus at Manchester's Old Trafford stadium.

SHEVCHENKO

He followed that by grabbing the only goal as Milan won the European Super Cup by beating Portuguese side Porto in Monaco.

Last season he was top scorer in Serie A with 24 goals which helped the club win the Italian league title for the first time since 1999 and was rewarded with a contract extension that will keep him at the San Siro until 2009.

Before joining Milan, Shevchenko spent five seasons at Dynamo and enhanced his reputation as a prolific goalscorer on the European stage.

In the 1997/98 season he scored a first-half hat-trick in a stunning 4-0 win at the Camp Nou against Spanish giants Barcelona.

The following season Shevchenko scored eight goals to help the Ukrainians into the semifinals of the competition and his outstanding performances saw him come third in the poll for the 1999 Fifa World Player of the Year award.

He won five championships and two Ukrainian Cups with Dynamo before packing his bags for Italy.

Shevchenko is the talisman of the Ukraine national team, but despite playing in many qualifying matches he is yet to play in a major final tournament for his country. He married Kristen Pazik in July and became a father in October when his son Jordan was born. *AFP*

Protest steals thunder from PGC race

AS Empire King was cruising to victory in the 32nd Presidential Gold Cup last Sunday, another battle was raging in front of the Santa Ana Park.

A big group of horsemen was protesting against the alleged failure of the Philippine Racing Commission to address its concerns against mandatory EIA (equine infectious anemia) testing for the country's race horses.

Led by William Dagan, about 300 horse owners, trainers, grooms and supporters accused Philracom chair Jimmy Dilag—who was a no-show at the PGC along with honoree President Macapagal-Arroyo—of "ignorance" and of neglecting "what's best for the industry."

The group insisted the EIA order is unsubstantiated by facts.

Present globally for 50 years

"EIA, according to respected veterinarian Romeo Modomo, has been present globally and in the Philippines for almost 50 years, and yet the racing industry has grown by leaps and bounds," Dagan said.

"In the US, only horses crossing state lines or being exported/imported are required to undergo the Coggins test."

Not transmittable to humans

Dagan claimed these horses comprise merely 20 percent of the total equine population while the remaining 80 percent are considered "members of the household" and not tested."

"In Third World countries, including China, the disease is ignored since it is not transmittable to humans and can only be transmitted among horses through flies, mosquitoes and needle-sharing," he said.

"That is why the Department of Agriculture's AO No. 5 of 1994 simply acknowledged the presence of EIA, while AO No. 17 of 2004 considered it a negligible disease since there has been no single documented death due to EIA. Thus, there has been no call for drastic measures as EIA is not of epidemic proportions."

In their protest, the horsemen accused the Philracom officials of overreacting to the 1994 AO.

Dagan said the protests aim to save the industry from the "dictatorial machinations" of the Philracom aimed at pleasing its favored few.

500 workers displaced

As this developed, Makati Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado, upon the instructions of Mayor Jejomar Binay, met the protesters to hear their grievances against EIA testing, which has led to the displacement of about 500 Makati workers.

The group also urged Dilag and his fellow Philracom officials to avoid "squid tactics," claiming Dagan's horses, for example, can't be positive as he has refused to have his horses undergo the Coggins test to show his support for his peers severely affected by the alleged unlawful program.

MARTINEZ: $56-million deal in the offing. AFP

All-star pitcher Martinez to leave Red Sox for Mets

BOSTON—All-star pitcher Pedro Martinez, who led Boston to their first title in 86 years last season, is expected to leave the Red Sox and sign with the New York Mets, the Boston Herald reported on Monday.

The Herald reported that New York wooed the three-time Cy Young Award winner by guaranteeing him a fourth year on his contract, something the Red Sox reportedly would not do. The Mets' deal reportedly is worth $56 million.

Martinez always had professed his fondness for pitching in Boston, where he won two of his Cy Youngs and was an integral part of the Red Sox's first championship team in 86 years.

Not the dominant pitcher he once was, Martinez went 16-9 with a 3.90 ERA—the highest ERA of his career—this past season in helping the Red Sox to their first World Series title since 1918.

Martinez, 33, has gone an astounding 117-37 in seven seasons with the Red Sox. He won Cy Young Awards in 1999 and 2000, when he went a combined 41-10 with a 1.90 ERA.

Signing Martinez would be a major move for the Mets, who have been criticized in recent years for not aggressively pursuing stars such as Vladimir Guerrero and Alex Rodriguez.

Losing Martinez also would be a big blow for the Red Sox, who reportedly lost out in the Carl Pavano sweepstakes to the rival New York Yankees. Boston did sign 41-year-old lefthander David Wells but is not expected to re-sign Derek Lowe, who won all three clinching games in the postseason. *AFP*

Coseteng strong bet for Driver of Year title

JODY Coseteng looms as one of the strongest contenders for the Driver of the Year plum in the 2nd Golden Wheel Awards following his overall victory in the 2004 National Touring Car Championship at the Batangas Racing Circuit recently.

Coseteng, driving for Caltex Havoline-SMB Strong Ice, accumulated a total of 142 points in the seven-round series sanctioned by the Automobile Association of the Philippines.

JODY Coseteng (fourth from left) celebrates his 8th touring car title with Caltex Havoline team manager Paul Familara (seventh from left), teammates Christian Aguilar (third from left), skipper Oscar Aguilar (fifth from left) and Dr. Peewee Mandiola (sixth from left) and supporters.

The DOY award will be handed out during gala rites in January. The Golden Wheel Awards will also honor the country's top motorsports achievers.

Coseteng clinched the title during the final leg of the NTCC in the 2004 PCSO Grand Prix at the BRC.

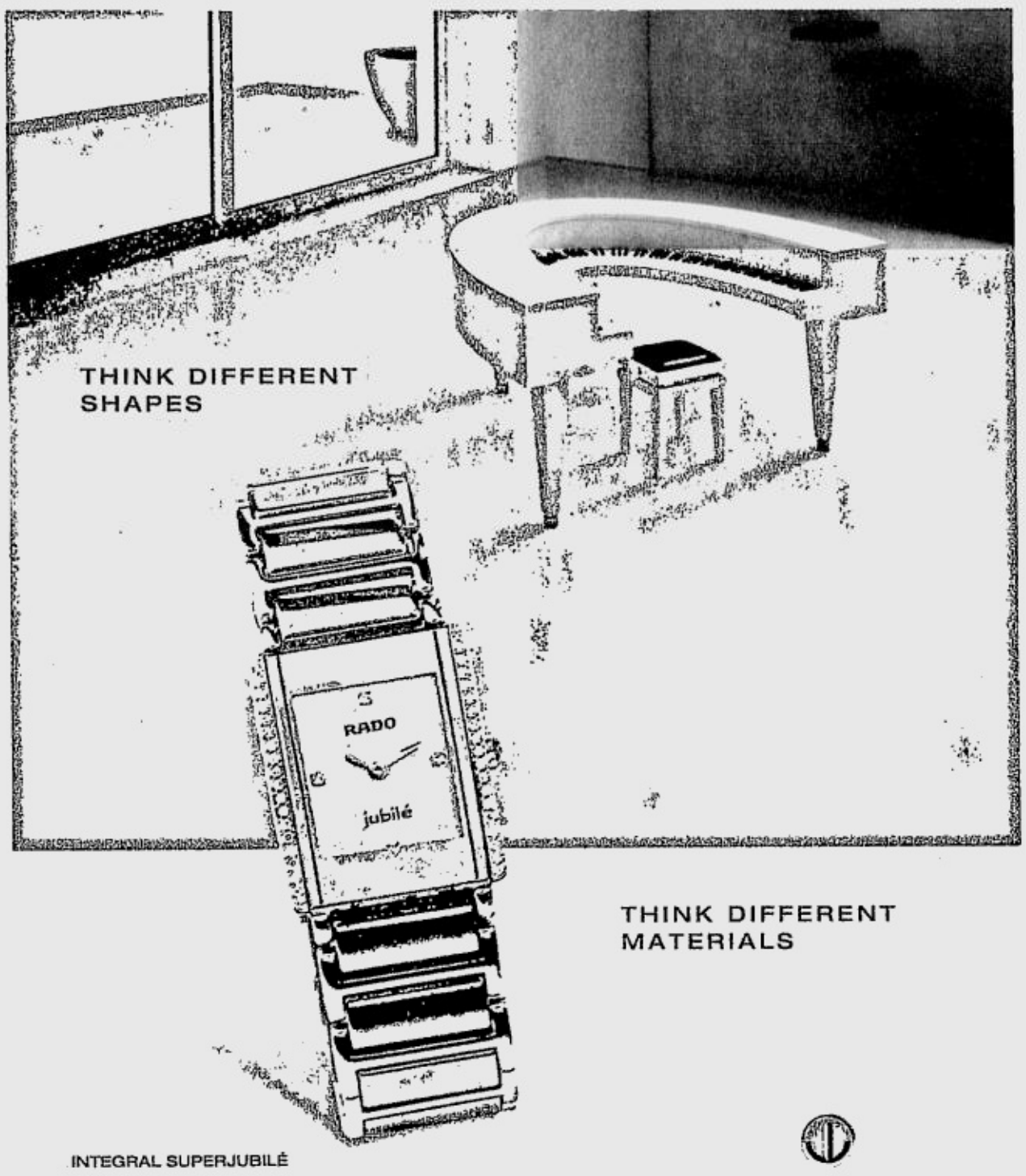
Rey Reyes of Autoklasse settled for runner-up honors with 124 points, 18 behind Coseteng and three in front of the third-placed Dominic Bon in the series sponsored by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Pilipinas Shell, Toyota Motors Phils., Norkis Yamaha, Kilton Motors, and MOF Company.

Reyes, who is also backed up by Tropical Ice Sparkling Water, GBSI, Jose Aliling Inc., topped the Class B division with 159 points, 18 ahead of Bon. Oscar Aguilar of Caltex Havoline wound up third with 58.

Miguel Lazaro copped the title in the National Junior Touring Car Championship with 178 points after sweeping the final races. Renan Morales finished second with 146 with lady driver Dahlia Guerrero settling for third (119).

Lazaro also claimed the Novice crown with 206 points over Morales (178) and Christian Aguilar of Caltex Havoline (118).

CEBU RACE WINNERS: Asia's Queen of the Road Mercedita Manipol and Athens Olympian Eduardo Buenavista (seventh and ninth from left, respectively) receive a giant check for P50,000 each from officials of Avia Performance Shoes after topping the Queen City Run, Asia's First Mardi Gras Run, in Cebu City, recently. Manipol and Buenavista also won a pair of Avia's latest running shoes.



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Little Drummer Boy/Kenny G	RA137
Silver Bells/Kenny G	RA138
The First Noel/Whitney Houston	RA139
Deck The Halls/Whitney Houston	RA141
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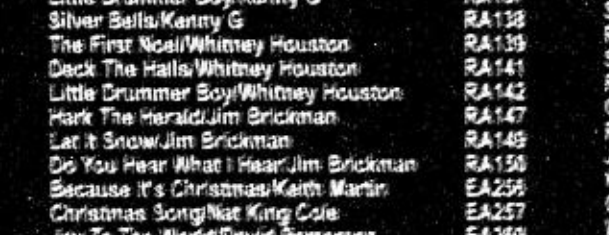

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Rudolph	rudolph
Santa Claus Is Coming To Town	santatwn
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We Wish You A Merry Christmas	wewishu
The Chipmunk Song	chipmunk
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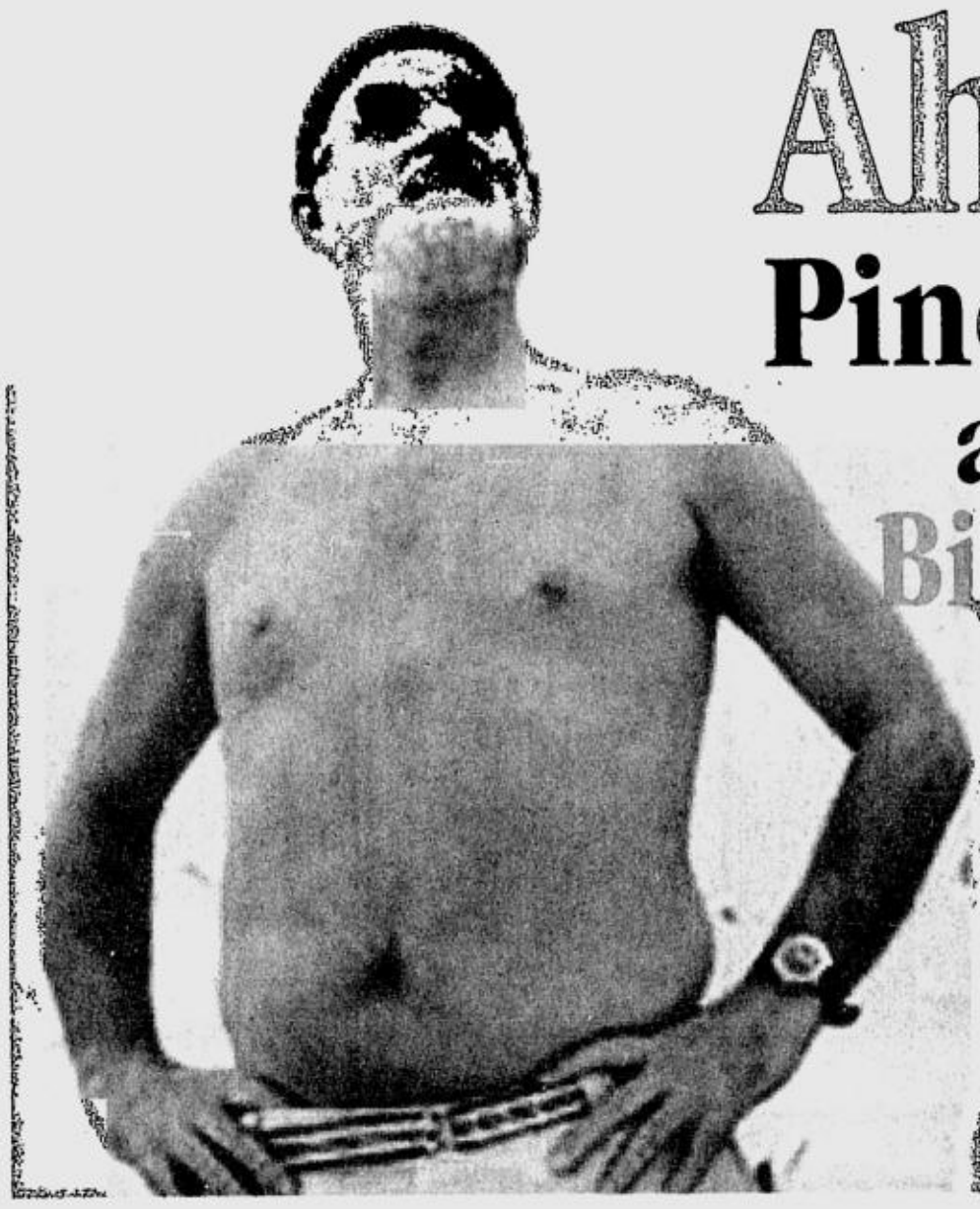

Ahoy!

Pinoy pirates aboard in new Bill Murray film

Those pirates who climbed on board the ship of Murray's oceanographer character were yelling in Filipino, all right, and I'll be darned, most of them look Filipino, too

DIRECTOR Wes Anderson

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—So there I was at an advance press screening last month of Bill Murray's new film "The Life Aquatic" when pirates appeared onscreen and spoke in... Filipino?

I sat up and listened more carefully to make sure that I was not simply going crazy from watching too many films because it was awards nomination time. Those pirates who climbed on board the ship of Bill Murray's oceanographer character (think Jacques Cousteau) were yelling in Filipino, all right, and I'll be darned, most of them look Filipino, too.

And, wait a minute, did one of the Caucasian actors just speak in my native tongue, too? Yes, indeed. And then the Pinoy pirates took him hostage and sped away in their boat.

I was enjoying this comedy-drama-adventure, but with the sudden appearance of Filipino buccaneers, I watched with rapt attention.

Indonesians, originally

Philippine fans of Wes Anderson's films, the acclaimed "The Royal Tenenbaums," "Rushmore" and "Bottle Rocket," will know what to expect in this movie which was partly filmed in Italy's famed Cinecitta studios. It's a quirky, wry, melancholic tale of an oceanographer and his eccentric crew and hangers-on (played by fine actors such as Owen Wilson, Anjelica Huston, Cate Blanchett, Willem Dafoe and Jeff Goldblum) who embark on a series of adventures involving a long-lost son, mythical sharks and, yes, Pinoy pirates.

But before some folks react rashly and protest why the pirates are Filipinos, a brief explanation may enlighten everyone. Sources at Disney, which distributes the film, said that in the original script of Anderson and Noah Baumbach, the pirates were Indonesians, not Pinoys. But apparently, in Italy, where the film was shot, the filmmakers couldn't find enough Indonesians to play the pirates. So guess who abound in Rome and thus got cast instead?

A check of the book-bound script received by this writer confirmed that the pirates in the film were indeed supposed to be Indonesians. The script is littered with lines like "Bill calmly addresses the pirates in Indonesian" and "Bill switches into rapid Indonesian."

Lovely guys

A day after the screening, when I met Willem Dafoe, who has been to the Philippines as a cast member of Oliver Stone's "Platoon" (he earned an Oscar best supporting actor nomination) and "Born on the Fourth of July," I asked him if he got to hang around with the Filipino actors.

"Yes, I did," Dafoe replied. "They were love-

AHOY!/ A2-3

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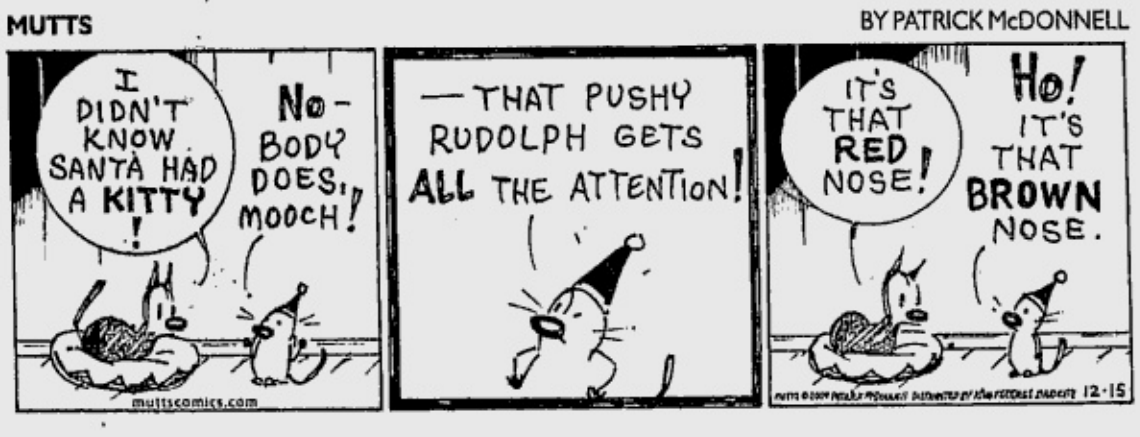


ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

DAVID HAD AN UNEASY FEELING ABOUT THE WOLF'S MOTIVE OF BEFRIENDING HIM

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: People like you. You're upbeat, breezy, cheerful and easygoing. Your optimism is the key to your success. You expect the best, and you generally find it. One of the reasons people like you is because you make them feel good. (This is a rare gift.) Expect increased solitude in the year ahead to learn something important.

Birthdate of: Tim Conway, comic actor; Helen Slater, actress; Betty Smith, writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): A female friend has good advice for you today. Listen to what is said, even if it sounds a bit outrageous, unorthodox or too modern for you. You can learn something.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You will definitely do something that calls attention to you today. Just be aware of this. In fact, you might want to dress so that you look your best.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Because you have an urge for adventure, do something out of the ordinary today. Visit shops or restaurants you've never been to before. Drive someplace new.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might have to discuss shared possessions or conflicting values with someone, probably a female. Learn to disagree in a peaceable way—one of mutual acceptance.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): The Moon is opposite your sign today. Because of this, you might feel that someone opposes your ideas. In any event, be prepared to be cooperative and go more than halfway.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You'll be pleased with any effort you make to get better organized today. You'll feel better if your surroundings are less cluttered.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): This is a lovely day for play, entertaining diversions, enjoying time with children, flirting with sweethearts, plus expressing your creative talents. You simply want to do your own thing!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Focus on home and family matters today. Talk to a parent, perhaps. Someone at home needs your attention. Take a moment to listen to what this person has to say.

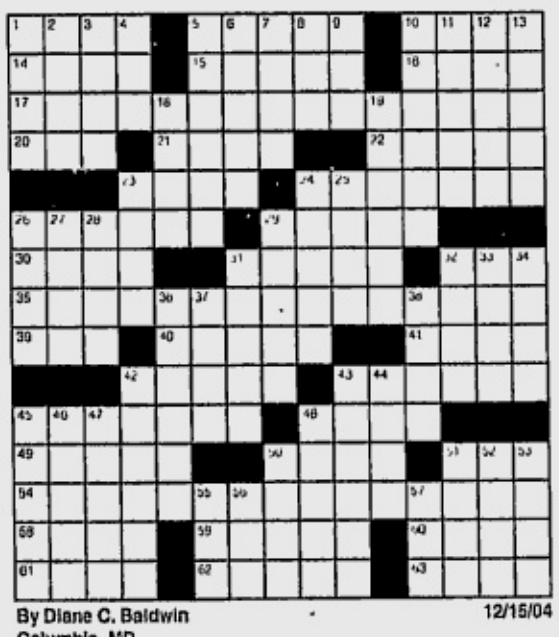
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a busy day! Short trips, buying and selling, shopping, plus discussions with siblings and relatives keep you on the go. Try to get as much done as you can.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Shopping will please you, especially buying things for yourself or female relatives. This is the kind of day when the going gets tough and the tough go shopping.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): The Moon is in your sign today. This both empowers you and makes you a bit more emotional at the same time.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You are very strong when dealing with friends today. Because others find you sympathetic to their needs, they respond to you.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD
12/15/04

ACROSS
1 Goalie's success
5 Supply food and service
10 Simpson boy
14 Lose heat
15 Sappho's last letter
16 To shelter
17 Irresistible charisma
20 Mars hue
21 Quahog
22 Flock members
23 Fiber source
24 Inventor's protections
26 Naysaying president
29 Challenged
30 Mineral supplement
31 Mournful lament
32 Quilters' gathering
35 Physical well-being enhancement
39 Slalom trail
40 Lazybones
41 Valhalla bigwig
42 Gents
43 I've got it!
45 Achieves
48 Encircle
49 Prickly plant
50 Harbor boats
51 Nurse a drink
54 Really rude conduct
58 Gumbo ingredient
59 Dough raiser
60 Enthralled by
61 Former Russian leader
62 Solid ground
63 By Jove!

DOWN
1 Flesh mark
2 Top-notch
3 Empty place
4 Shade provider
5 Nab
6 Capital of Jordan
7 Harnessed pair
8 Rotten __ (cad)
9 Flowed
10 Soaked oneself
11 Foreigner
12 Bowler's button
13 Short-term workers
18 Field measure
19 Admiration
23 __ fide (authentic)
24 Dry out
25 Jason's ship
26 Moral weakness
27 Messes up
28 Boot tips
29 Eating regimens
31 Sharp decreases
32 Foreshadow
33 Actor Estrada
34 Sicilian spouter
36 Casual top
37 __-Ude, Russia
38 Edsel, for one
42 Roman emperor
43 Half a quarter
44 Heavenly bear
45 Monastery head
46 Difficult journeys
47 Jeweled headband
48 Invitation holder
50 Slope apparatus
51 Be a stool pigeon
52 Whit
53 Spur on
55 Soap ingredient
56 Approval vote
57 Contend

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

P	I	T	T		A	B	E	S		A	M	U	S	E
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C	A	U	G	H	T	R	E	D	H	A	N	D	E	D
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TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

Ahoy! Pinoy pirates aboard in new Bill Murray film

"THE LIFE AQUATIC" co-stars Anjelica Huston and Jeff Goldblum

OWEN Wilson and Willem Dafoe

From page A2-1

ly guys. I really liked them a lot. They came from the Filipino community in Rome. They were great. They were all good sports. We shot most of those scenes near Civitavecchia. They weren't all Filipinos, though. There were some Japanese guys in there."

Did he get to talk about his filming experiences in the Philippines with the Rome-based Pinoys who suddenly found themselves acting in a Bill Murray movie?

Dafoe answered, "Oh, sure. They were aware that I had been there a couple of times so we talked about the Philippines. I haven't been there in a while. I'm sure that it has changed so much since I've been there but I'd love to go back."

Later, he asked me, "Was the Tagalog [Filipino] spoken in the film good?"

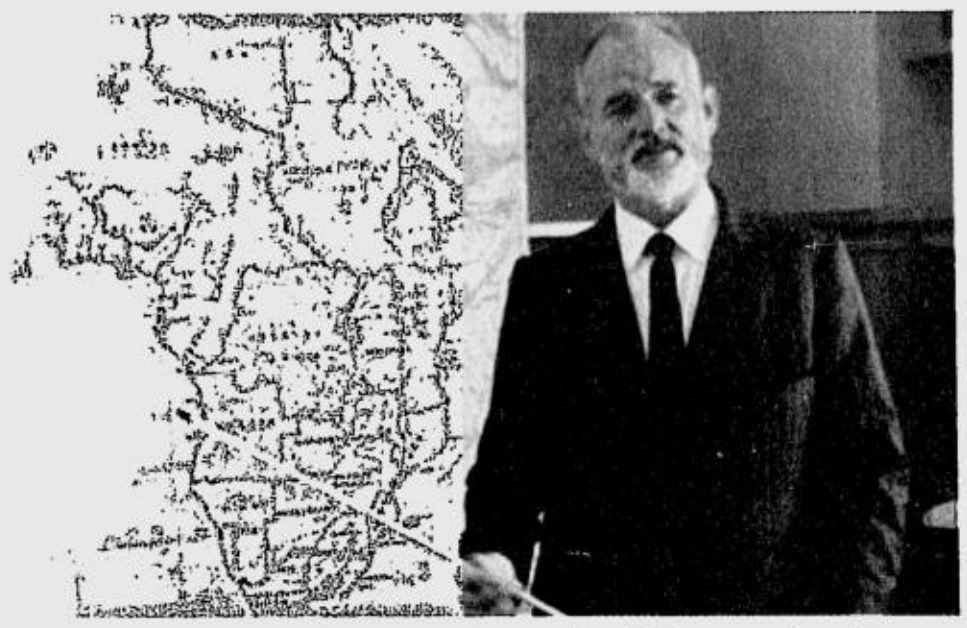
Using muscles

A paragraph in the film's production notes describes how Bud Cort, who was in the classic comedy "Harold and Maude" and who plays the Filipino-speaking white guy in the movie, learned to speak the Philippine national language: "Throwing himself into the role, Cort even spent weeks learning the [Filipino] language so he could converse with the Filipino actors kidnapping him. 'It's a beautiful tongue,' he notes. 'It involves using muscles in your mouth and throat that you would never think of using.'"

"The Life Aquatic" opened in the US Friday to mostly good reviews. Los Angeles Times' critic Carina Chocano praised the film and mentioned the Filipino pirates in this context: "On the face of it, Wes Anderson's new movie, 'The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou,' is an adventure tale about a Jacques Cousteau-on-the-skids-type who decides to pull an Ahab on the shark that ate his buddy. But mostly, like all Wes Anderson movies, it's about being 11 1/2—it's a recurring motif, anyway—sometime around the late '70s, an age-era axis favored by Anderson and at least partly attributable to his current age of 35.

"An exquisitely evocative movie that elevates rueful melancholia to a superpower, 'The Life Aquatic,' co-written with Noah Baumbach, is not exactly a plot-lover's pizza.

"No doubt this endorsement isn't inspiring fans of Spielberg to leap off the couch and get on the horn with MovieFone—although Murray does single-handedly take on a band of Philippine pirates in a scene that's a surreal version of somebody's dream about 'Apocalypse Now.' But this shark movie, which alludes to the other shark movie, which along with 'Star Wars' is responsible for blockbustering into oblivion the best decade American movies ever saw, has something to say about that, too. Not for nothing is the dead guy played by '70s icon Seymour Cassel, while Bud Cort of 'Harold and Maude' fame is bound and gagged by pirates.



"SHARK MOVIE." One critic calls Murray the "patron saint of inchoate yearning and exquisite disappointment"

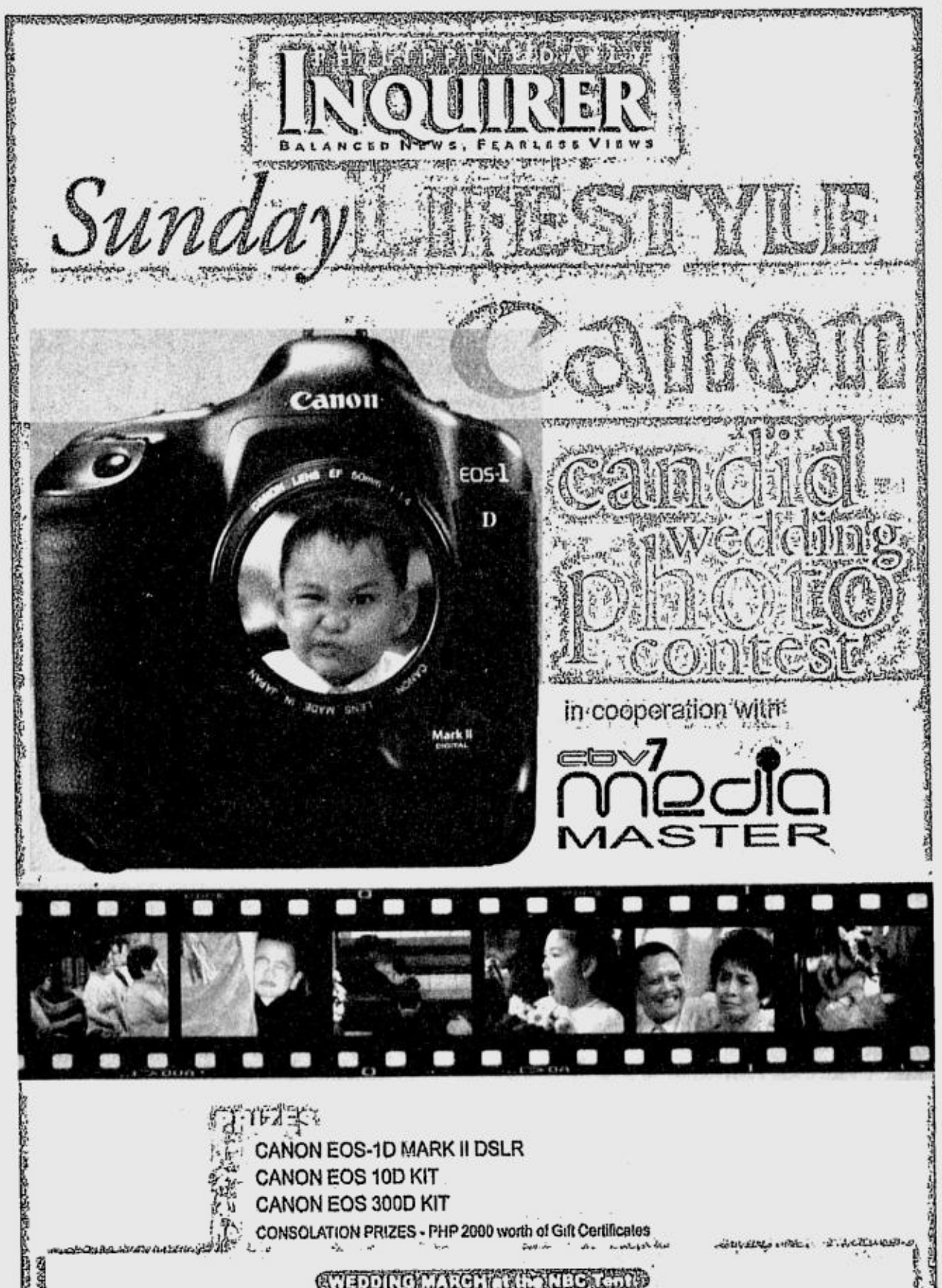
CATE Blanchett

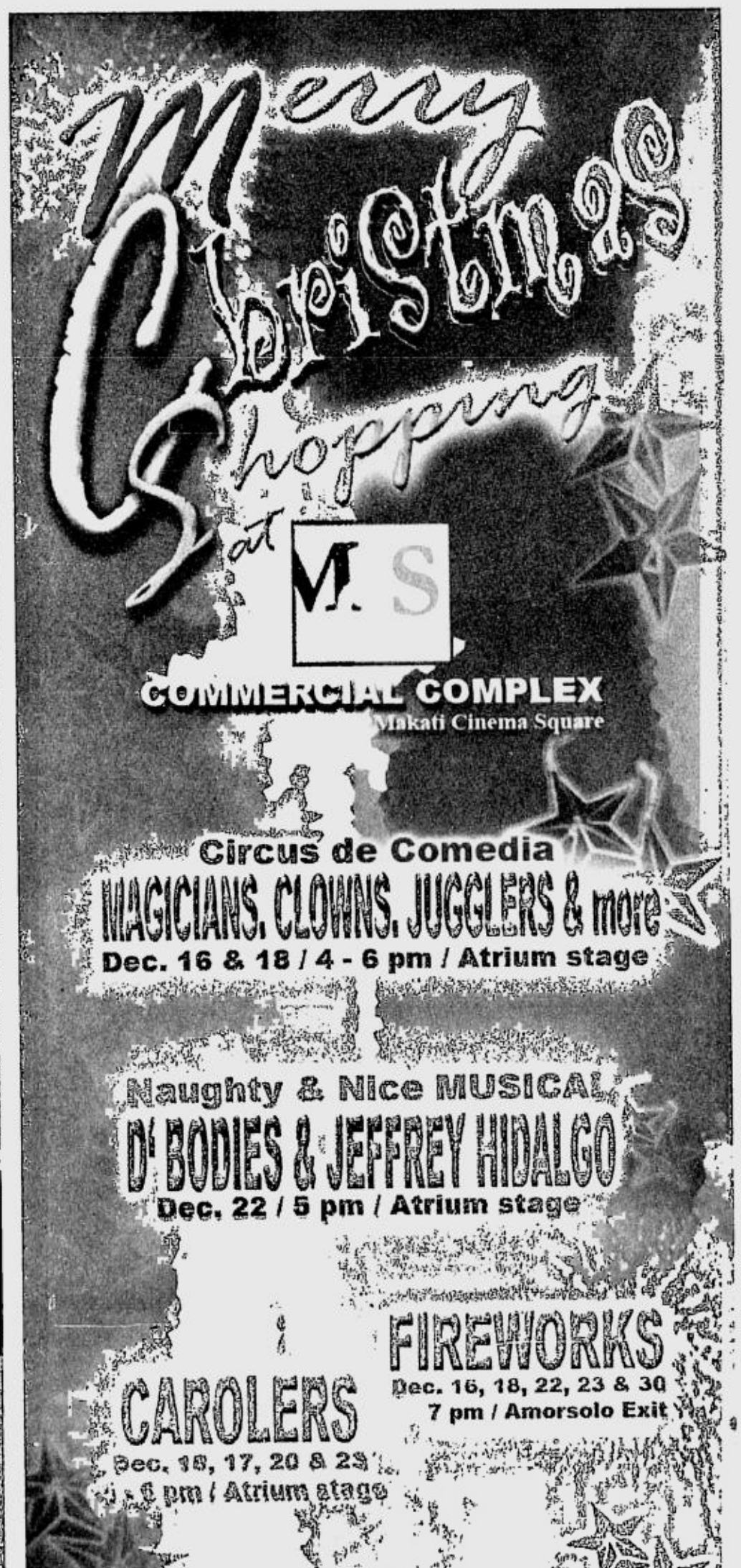
Meandering pace

"On the other hand, if you've already glued a statuette of Bill Murray, patron saint of inchoate yearning and exquisite disappointment, to your dashboard, nothing about 'The Life Aquatic' will disappoint. Because talk about man against the universe."

A. O. Scott, in his review for The New York Times, wrote, "As someone who was more annoyed than charmed by 'Tenenbaums,' I should have been completely exasperated with 'The Life Aquatic,' with its wispy story and wonder-cabinet production design, but to my surprise I found it mostly delightful. Some of this has to do with Bill Murray, who occupies nearly every frame of the picture, usually sighing and frowning right in the middle of the screen... If you allow yourself to surrender to 'The Life Aquatic,' you may find that its slow, meandering pace and willful digressions are inseparable from its pleasures."

Variety critic Robert Koehler penned a dissenting review: "The affectionately confused life that usually pulsates a Wes Anderson film has drifted out to sea in 'The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou.' During one of his trysts with Jane (Cate Blanchett), Ned (Owen Wilson) abandons his watch on deck and doesn't see Filipino pirates board the ship and kidnap meek bond company rep Bill (Bud Cort), who speaks [Filipino]. Not only does Steve (Bill Murray) pull off a ridiculously-staged, one-man Dirty Harry attack on the fleeing pirates, but this bit gets extended into a mission to rescue Bill from a deserted resort island."





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2 BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON	2 PASIYAM	2 BIRTH	6 BAD SANTA	2 BAD SANTA	2 PASIYAM
3 BIRTH	3 HONEY	3 BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON	7 NATIONAL TREASURE	3 ALEXANDER	3 OUT OF REACH
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS	4 HAROLD & KUMAR	4 2046		4 BIRTH	4 MAY
5 NATIONAL TREASURE		GB1 (Greenbelt 1)		5 NATIONAL TREASURE	5 TAXI
		1 BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON			
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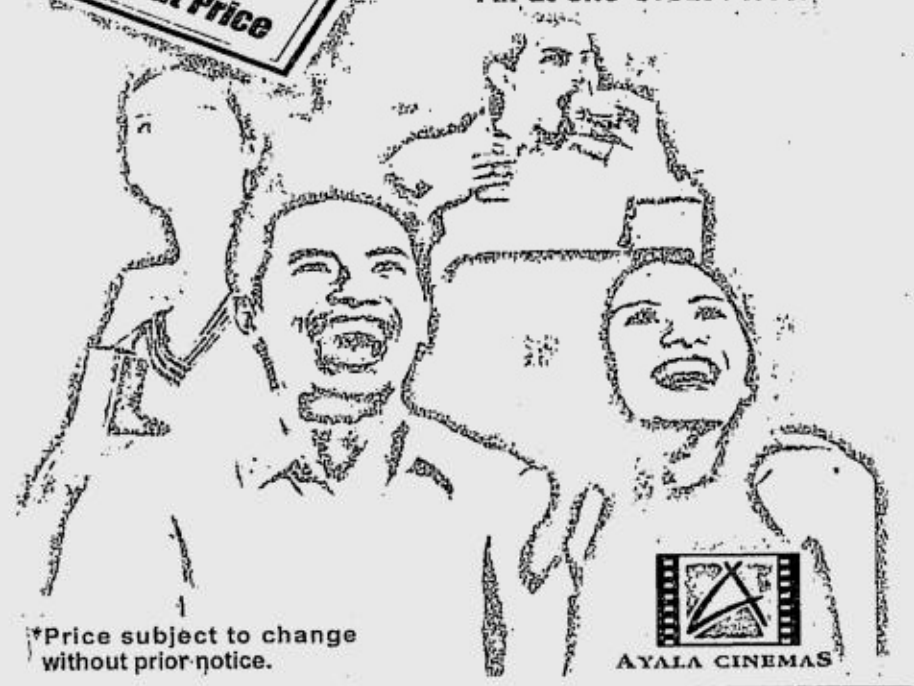

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3 THE FORGOTTEN
4 SEED OF CHUCKY
5 NAKAW NA SANDALI

LIPA (043) 757-3684 (043) 312-5870
1 PA-SIYAM
2 ALEXANDER
3 SEED OF CHUCKY
4 BRIDGET JONES 2
5 ONE MISSED CALL

DASMARIÑAS (046) 852-2125 (046) 416-4332
1 THE FORGOTTEN
2 DARKNESS
3 BUKAS MAY UMAGA
4 CELLULAR
5 MAY

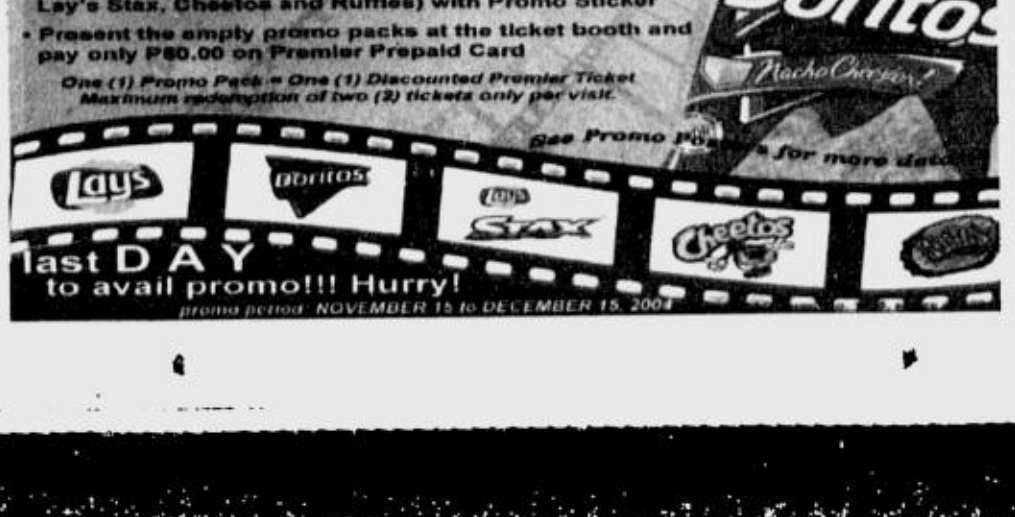
ANGELES (045) 892-2348
1 OUT OF REACH
2 TAXI
3 SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
4 THE GRUDGE

IMUS (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188
1 HELLWOLF
2 BIRTH
3 NANG NAK
4 SHREK 2
5 NATIONAL TREASURE
6 NED KELLY

STARMILLS (045) 875-1927 (045) 981-5270
1 AFTER THE SUNSET
2 TAXI
3 SAPLOT
4 SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
5 ALEXANDER
6 DARKNESS

BACOLOD (034) 441-0453 (034) 441-0469
1 THE POLAR EXPRESS
2 BRIDGET JONES 2
3 NATIONAL TREASURE
4 CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
5 CELLULAR
6 AFTER THE SUNSET

ILOILO (033) 336-8070
1 WHITE CHICKS
2 CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
3 NATIONAL TREASURE
4 SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
5 SAW
6 DARKNESS



SHOW STOPPER

Pink Yule with gay choir

PRIDE Manila Chorus, the Philippines' first out-of-the-closet gay male chorus, joins seven other mixed-gender choirs in the special concert "A Merry Novo Christmas 2004" at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Little Theater tonight at 7 p.m.

The concert is produced by the Novo Concertante group as part of its mission to make Filipinos more appreciative of choral music, and to recruit fresh talents and train them towards higher artistic excellence.

Pride Manila Chorus is Manila's answer to the popular gay male choirs all over the world such as the New York City Gay Men's Choir, the Rainbow Voices of Toronto and London's Pink Singers.

This is Pride Manila's first public concert, which hopefully will pave the way for its grand concert early next year.

Pride Manila Chorus was born out of a need to advocate equal rights and acceptance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people by the Filipino society through the power of music and outreach projects.

The choir is a joint effort of the Gay Men's Support Group (GMSG) and ProGay Philippines.

Tickets to "Merry Novo Christmas 2004" are available at the CCP box office, tel. 832-3704 to 06, and Ticketworld.

Bookings for Pride Manila Chorus performances can be arranged with the GMSG. E-mail barneyard@yahoo.com, or call Oscar at 367-3109 or Bryan at 0927-6443854.

Beckhams attacked, but 'Jesus is fine'

LONDON — A protester has attacked a controversial waxwork nativity scene featuring England soccer captain David Beckham as Joseph and his pop star wife "Posh Spice" Victoria as the Virgin Mary.

"He pushed Posh and Becks over," said a spokeswoman for Madame Tussaud's waxwork museum in London on Monday. "It caused some damage but we don't know how much. The baby Jesus is fine."

Anglicans, Catholics and Presbyterians have united in calling the exhibit a new low in the cult of celebrity worship.

But Madame Tussaud's said it was popular with the public, who were outraged at Sunday's vandalism.

. "People were appalled," said the spokeswoman. "We had members of the public complaining that the nativity was the only reason they were coming in today.

"Staff gave chase but the attacker managed to escape," she added. "We are hoping to reopen the exhibit as soon as possible."

Controversy over the nativity has caused great mirth in British media. The Sun newspaper even instituted a dial-in line on Monday for anyone who might be able to identify the attacker.

In the wax tableau, Australian pop star Kylie Minogue hovers above the crib as an angel while Victoria lays her shawled head tenderly on Beckham's shoulder.

Tony Blair, George W. Bush and the Duke of Edinburgh star as The Three Wise Men. The shepherds are played by Hollywood star Samuel L. Jackson, British actor Hugh Grant and camp Irish comedian Graham Norton.

Madame Tussaud's have apologized for any offense caused, but insist the tableau was intended only as a tongue-in-cheek way of bringing the nativity to a wider audience.

The Beckhams disassociated themselves from the nativity, saying they had no idea they were to be depicted that way.

Reuters

MTRCB ▸ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP

OPENS TODAY!

Find out why the critics are laughing out loud!

"One of the year's best films!" -Liko Y. Thompson, LYTRULES.COM

"Lewd, raunchy & likely to spawn a sequel or two." -Colin Souter, EFILMCRITIC

"It's freakin' hilarious." -Kathy Cano Murillo, ARIZONA REPUBLIC

"Made me laugh loud and often as much if not more than any other movie I've seen this year." -Kevin N. Laforest, MONTREAL FILM JOURNAL

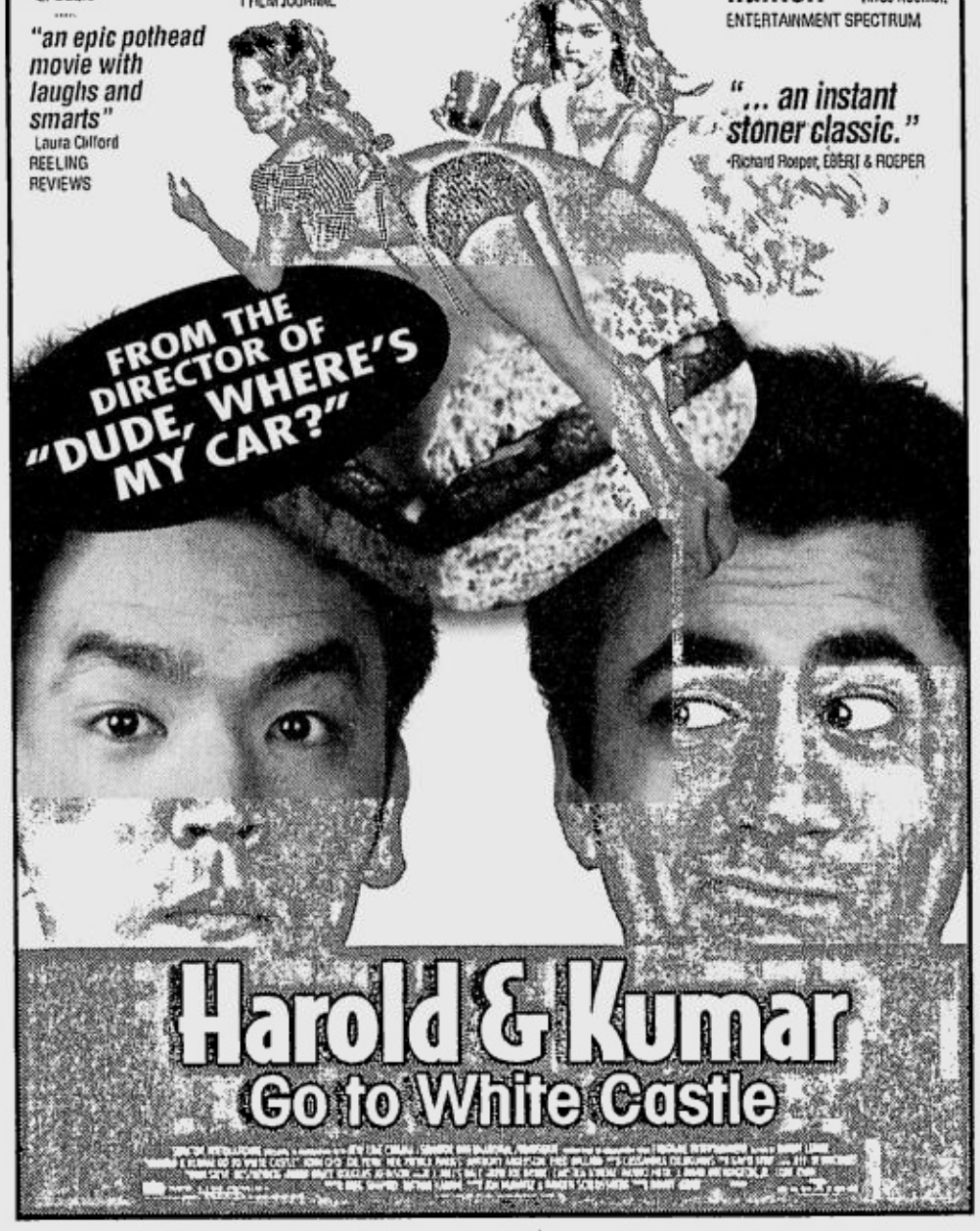
"When the 90 minutes are up, you'll likely wonder why you laughed so hard and so often at something so silly." -Louis B. Hobson, JAM! MOVIES

"Laugh-out-loud!" -Carole Rickey, PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

"This new comedy offers 'American Pie' type teen humor." -Vince Koehler, ENTERTAINMENT SPECTRUM

"an epic pothead movie with laughs and smarts" Laura Clifford REELING REVIEWS

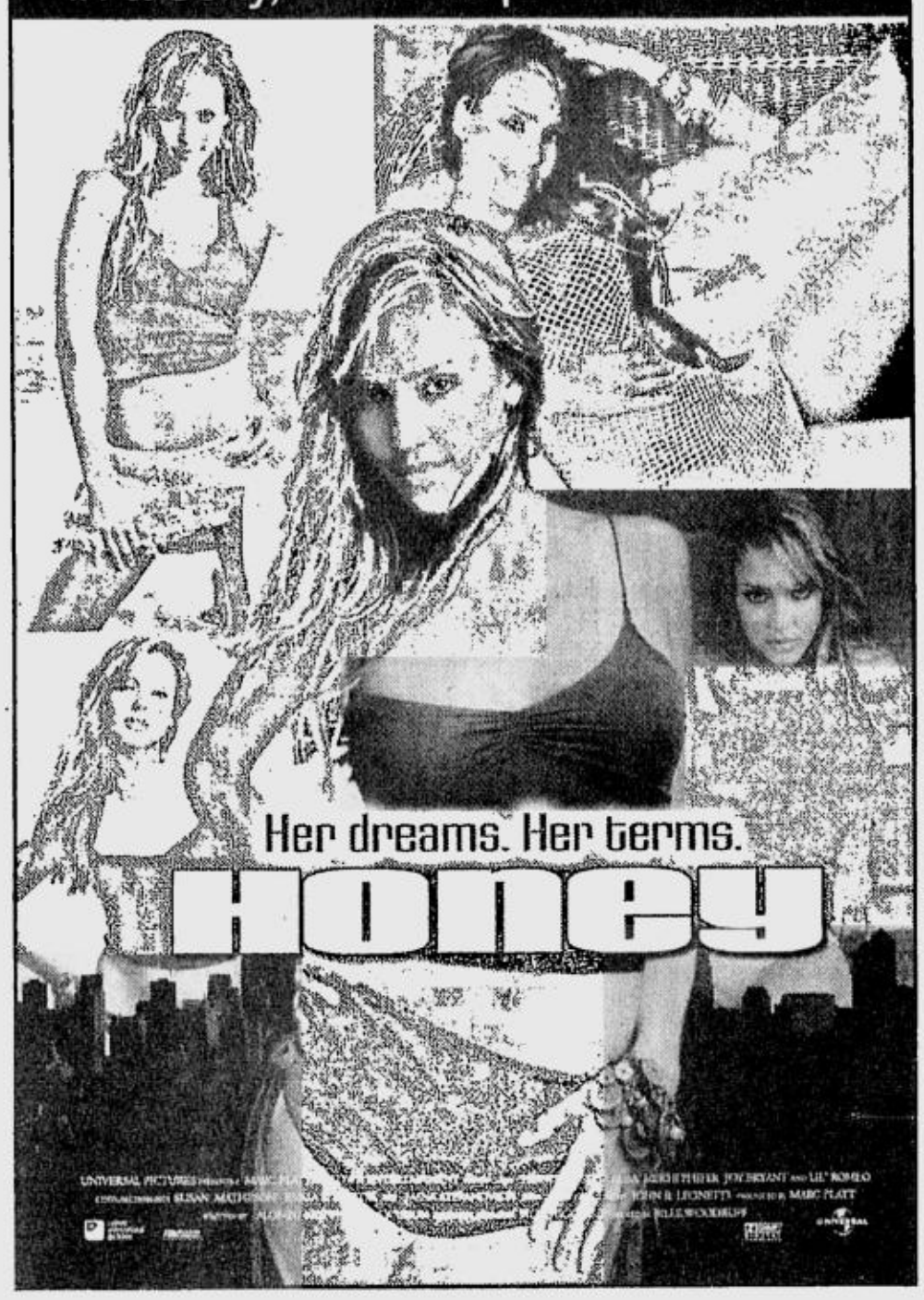
"... an instant stoner classic." -Richard Roeper, EBERT & ROEPER



MTRCB ▸ PG-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP

OPENS TODAY!

See Dark Angel's JESSICA ALBA in a sexy, wild and provocative role



THIRD WEEK – NOW SHOWING

MTRCB ▸ R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP

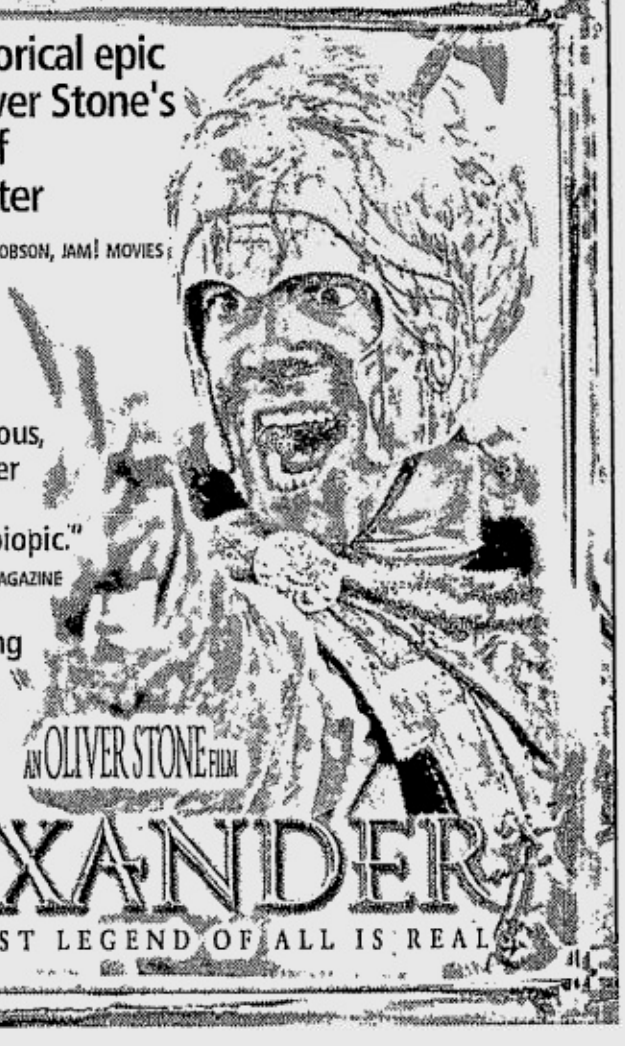
ONE OF THE BIGGEST FILMS OF THE YEAR!
NOW BREAKING BOXOFFICE RECORDS IN MANILA!

"A sweeping historical epic that confirms Oliver Stone's position as one of Hollywood's master storytellers" -Louis Hobson, JAM! MOVIES

"Phenomenal!" -Stefan Halley, HERO REALM

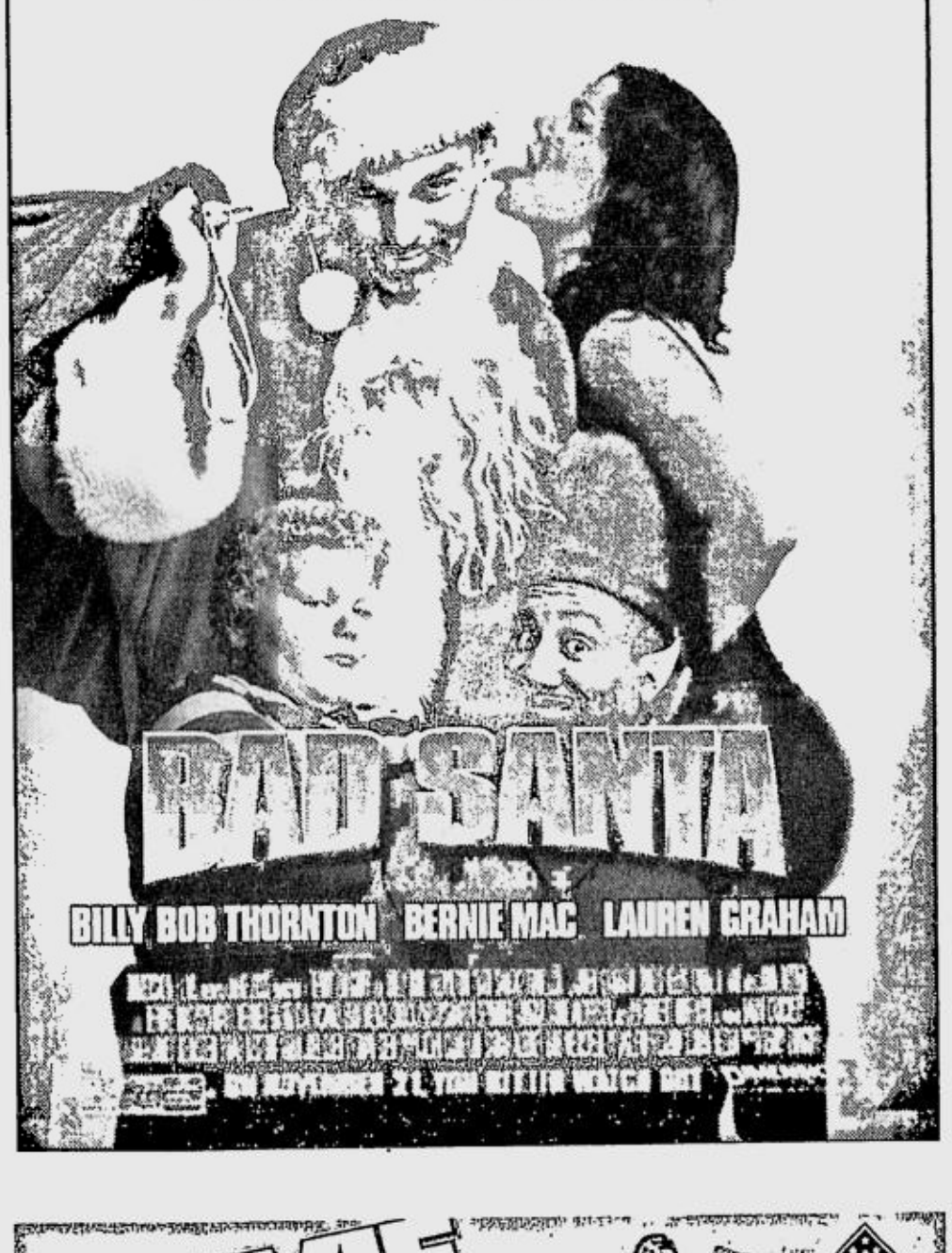
"Monumentally ambitious, Oliver Stone's Alexander accomplishes the twin objectives of the epic biopic." -Annlee Ellingson, BOXOFFICE MAGAZINE

"Boldly acted, absorbing and satisfying as a history lesson." -William Arnold, SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER



MABUBUSOG KA SA KATATAWA NGAYON
WALA NG MAS SASALBAHE PA SA KANYA!

GET NAUGHTY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



the national commission for culture & the arts in cooperation with
mowelfund film institute / dagupan city heritage commission
city government of dagupan / provincial government of pangasinan & lingoren gallery presents

PELIKULA AT KULTURA 2004

the national cinema audience development program
GOES TO DAGUPAN CITY!
A Tribute to
VICTORIO C. EDADES
SON OF DAGUPAN, REVOLUTIONARY ARTIST

Film screenings of EDADES:
Modernism in Philippine Art *by Nick Deocampo*

Dec 16 Bolosan High School

Symposium at the Dagupan City Museum
10 am - 12nn
Campus screenings will also be held at
University of Luzon, University of Pangasinan,
Computronix College & Lyceum Northwestern University

FOR INFORMATION PLS CALL MFI 727 1915 / 727 1961

MOVIE Delights

Fridays

- Purchase any of the Frito Lay products (Lay's, Doritos, Lay's Stax, Cheetos and Ruffles) with Promo Sticker
- Present the empty promo packs at the ticket booth and pay only P50.00 on Premier Prepaid Card

One (1) Promo Pack = One (1) Discounted Premier Ticket
Maximum redemption of two (2) tickets only per visit.

See Promo Posters for more details

Lay's Doritos Lay's Stax Cheetos

last DAY to avail promo!!! Hurry!

promo period: NOVEMBER 15 to DECEMBER 15, 2004

Negative effects of television

(Conclusion)

SOME parents and educators are leery of other negative effects of television on young viewers, like the medium's tendency to *make children less resourceful.*

For instance, a father recalls that, when he was a kid, he and his friends "were always thinking up things to do like games, projects and trips. Today, my children keep complaining that they have nothing to do. They're simply lazy. If someone doesn't entertain them, they can happily sit there watching TV all day!"

Another negative effect of this impinges on the "lazy" televiewing children themselves. They sense their parents' disappointment in them, believe they are deficient and feel that this makes them less worthy of admiration and respect. So, it's a lose-lose situation all the way.

Television, when viewed too much, *has an adverse effect on children's achievement in school.* One study, for instance, shows that younger children who watch more TV than others, have lower scores in reading and achievement tests.

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

Other observers fret that, to some extent, many viewers are *addicted to the experience of watching TV.* True, it isn't as severe as smoking or addiction to alcoholic drinks, but some of its consequences are also cause for concern.

TV is similarly faulted for *creating or intensifying stereotypes.* Researchers observe that many programs "promote suspicion, intolerance and even violence against those who are different. Racial and ethnic stereotypes are common. 'Bad guys' are often from foreign countries and speak with foreign-sounding accents."

Women are also depicted in unenlightened ways on the small screen. They are characterized "predominantly as victims of violent crimes. Worse, in many shows, the plotlines depict women as 'asking for abuse.' And, when women are shown in a 'power role,' they're usually cast as vengeful, deceitful and manipulative people who are doomed to failure."

In addition, TV precociously exposes children to excessive sexuality. For instance, the American Psychological Association estimates that teenagers in the US are exposed to 14,000 sexual references and innuendos per year on TV! Of these, only 150 deal with responsibility or abstinence.

Also, implied sexual activity on television occurs "most often between unmarried couples with little commitment to one another." This sends the wrong signals to impressionable young viewers.

Finally, children are desensitized through violent TV shows and video games. According to Japanese researchers, children exposed to video violence more frequently than others tend to be more aggressive, competitive and hyperactive.

They note that video games enable players to win points largely by killing opponents. No points are awarded for problem-solving, meditation or cooperative behavior.

These potential negative effects of television on younger viewers are so worrisome that a number of psychologists urge that children younger than two and a half years of age shouldn't watch TV at all; children older than two and a half years but younger than four years should watch TV only half an hour a day, and children aged four years should watch only one hour of TV each day. What do *you* think?

Feedback

From Lorenzo S. Abacan of Meycauayan, Bulacan: "If we adults must be careful about the TV shows our children watch, we should also worry about the commercials they view.

"For instance, a commercial about a dishwashing product has a man being chided by his friend for eating smelly food, the strong smell of which his wife dislikes.

"But the man says his wife won't know the truth because the dishwashing product does not leave any trace of odor of the food on the dishes and kitchen utensils he used.

"True enough, when the wife investigates, she fails to find any evidence that her husband has eaten the 'forbidden' food.

"Although the commercial points out how impressive the product's cleaning strength is, it also intimates that there is nothing wrong about telling a lie, as long as you don't get caught.

"TV commercials like this appear to be harmless, but we have to realize that constant exposure to them, especially for children who are still naïve and uncritical, could contribute to the malformation of their values."

'Lam-ang'

Romance, action and adventure abound in "Lam-ang," a rousing new musical by Von de Guzman, directed by Ricky Abad for Tanghalang Ateneo, on Dec. 15-18. Call 426-6001 loc. 5121, or visit http://www.tanghalangateneo.org.

"Lam-ang" is about a precocious Ilocano lad who embarks on a journey to find his father, his fortune, a suitable wife and the acceptance of his Christian neighbors. Along the way, he mows down an entire tribe of headhunters, romances several maidens and battles a ferocious shark.

Underneath all the excitement and escapades lies a quest for identity in a changing world, to which everyone, particularly the youth, can relate.

ALIW award nominee for best dance group, The GoG!rls will dance up a storm tonight with sexy male celebrities

GoG!rls, Tuesday, Andrew E at Ratsky

IF YOU were an all-girl group with a 2004 Aliw Award nomination for best dance group and a triple platinum award from Star Records, what would you do to rev up your Christmas while getting your own album ready?

Stage a major concert, what else?

That is precisely what The GoG!rls, proponents of the "Otso-Otso" dance craze, are about to do.

Together with sister group The Flawless Girls of "MTB Ang Saya-saya," The GoG!rls will heat up the pre-Christmas nightlife with "Sexy, Naughty, Bitchy Wel," a dance-comedy-fashion show with special guests Tuesday Vargas and Andrew E at Ratsky Tomas Morato on Tuesday, Dec. 21, at 9 p.m.

Temperatures will rise as the girls give a nonstop show of beauty, music and energetic dance moves. While the girls heat you up, the irrepressible beats of novelty rapper and hitmaker Andrew E and the hilarious comedy of Tuesday Vargas will set your Christmas season on fire.

Hyubs, Justin de Leon of the Viva Hot Men, Mike Chan and Bobby Yan of "Chowtime Na!" complete the lineup, together with other surprise male celebrities.

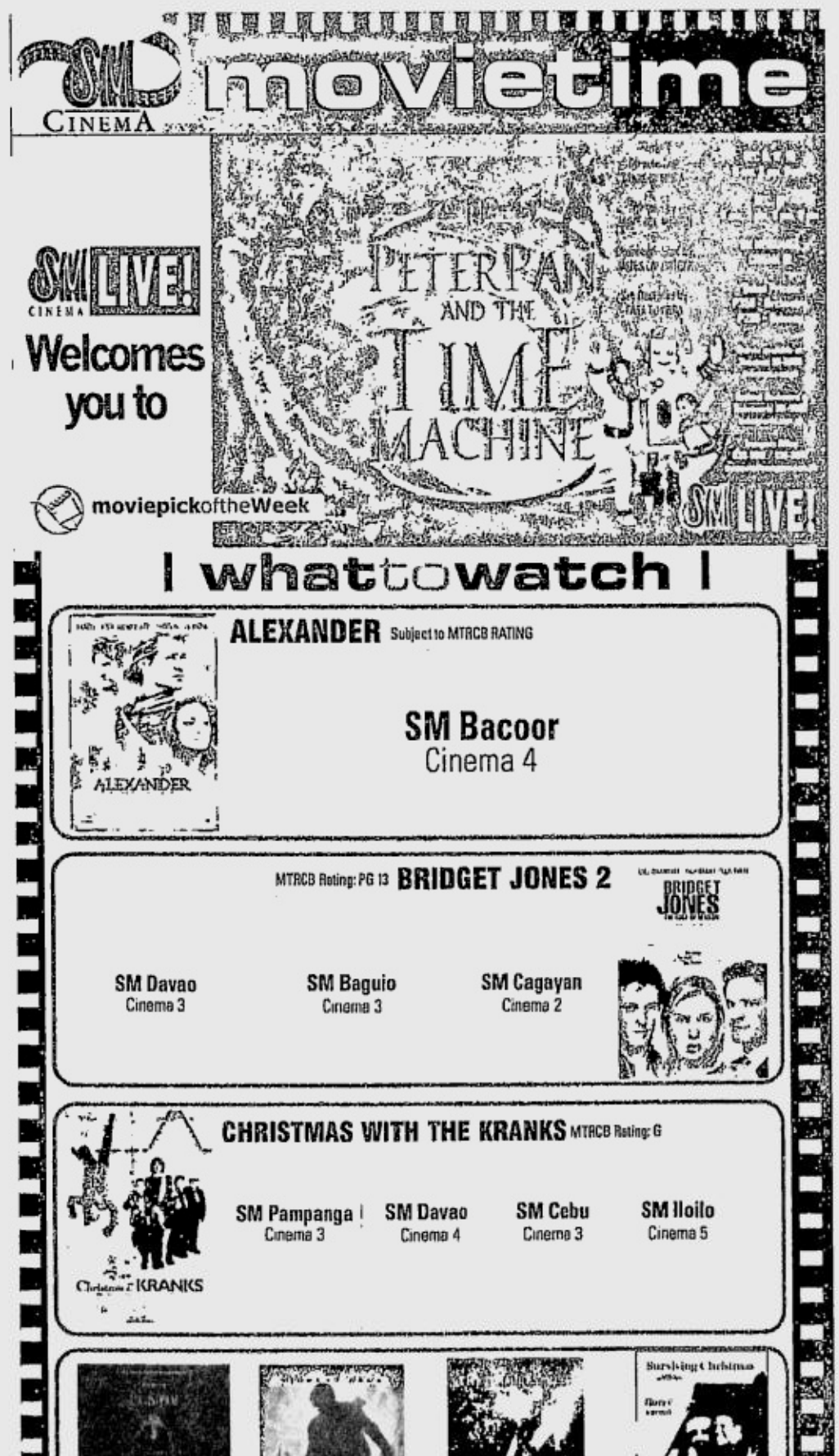
"Sexy, Naughty, Bitchy Wel" is for the benefit of the Kaisahang Buhay Foundation or KBF. KBF is a private, nonprofit, child and family welfare organization based in Quezon City.

It is the only nongovernment organization in the Philippines implementing local adoption. It also manages day care centers, offers services for single mothers, foster care facilitation and educational assistance for independent living.

Visit their website at http://moz-com.com/~kbf.

The show is produced by Got2Go Ven2res Inc. and Alternative Public Relations and Events Live Science with Wave 89.1, Fanny Serrano Salon Greenhills and Jancen Medical Spa as major sponsors. It is also supported by Gold's Gym, MV Virgin Mary of MBRS Lines, Hucky Industrial Enterprises and Webstar Philippines Entertainment.

For tickets, call Got2Go! Ven2res at 453-9420; 0920-9253231 or 0917-3201166.



DID YOU KNOW...

MTV USA hired Gary Valenciano to be the main performer last Oct. 27 before about 1,500 American chief executive officers of AOL, Xerox, L'Oreal, General Mills and other corporations in the event called "Diversity Best Practices" gala and awards dinner in Washington DC. Gary V sang "Spain," among others. Also in the audience at the Marriot Wardham Hotel were US Secretary Norman Mineta and 2004 Miss America Ericka Dunlap.

METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL

The biggest season in RP movies

FILMFEST FARE. Now classics are film festival movies (from top, clockwise) "Himala" by Ishmael Bernal with Nora Aunor at her best, "Brutal" by Marilou Diaz-Abaya with Amy Austria (with Perla Bautista) at her most moving, and "Insiang" by Lino Brocka with Hilda Koronel at her most beautiful.

PERHAPS the most anticipated time for the local film industry, December is the month that producers set their sights on from the start of the year. They save their best movies for the annual Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF), under strain of criticism for not releasing quality films during the other months.

In fact, four of this festival year's entries have come under fire for allegedly being produced by the same film company. Why is a slot in the MMFF so highly coveted?

SHOW TIME

Former movie producer, lawyer Espiridion Laxa explains that, during the festival, since no foreign movies are shown, Philippine movies invariably rake it in. Laxa is the MMFF executive committee's chair on legal affairs and rules and regulations.

Production costs are huge, especially for ambitious films shot on locations abroad, or those employing expensive digital effects.

"For example," Laxa recounts, "for the air raid scene in Regal Films' 'Yamashita,' they had to digitally create the airplanes. The scene lasted six minutes on screen, but the effect alone cost P14 million."

But the investment paid off, he said, since "Yamashita" was named Best Picture of the 2001 MMFF. The trophy came with a hefty cash prize.

Besides, just being included in the festival lineup already earns much-needed subsidy for the producer. "The festival committee gives the subsidy so that better-quality films will be made," said Laxa. "President Gloria Arroyo gave P50 million in 2002. Out of that, P4 million went to the producers of each of the film entries. Last year, the film producers received P1 million each from what was left of the 2002 subsidy."

This year, producers received a subsidy, too, but Laxa did not disclose the amount.

Finally, producers are after the prestige. Being included in the MMFF's lineup puts the movies, and the producers, way ahead of the pack.

In short, Laxa says, "It's image-building. Producers want the honor of being included in the filmfest. The perception is that (if your movie is in the MMFF) you're good."

To celebrate the festival's 30th anniversary, eight films have been selected for nationwide screening from Dec. 25-Jan. 9, 2005: "Mano Po 3," "Aishite Imasu 1941," "Happy Together," "Sigaw," "Panaghoy sa Suba," "Spirit of the Glass," "Lastikman" and "Enteng Kabisote."

The festival kicks off with a float parade in key cities of the country. The fun and fanfare will culminate in the much-awaited awards night on Dec. 29 at the Aliw Theater, CCP Complex.

Several MMFF winners have been screened and won awards at prestigious international film festivals. Some of the best films that were products of the festival are: "Ganito Kami Noon, Paano Kayo Ngayon?" (1976), "Burlesk Queen" (1977), "Himala" (1982), "Shake, Rattle and Roll" (1984), "Jose Rizal" (1998), "Muro Ami" (1999), "Tanging Yaman" (2000), "Mano Po" (2002), and "Crying Ladies" (2003).

WEDNESDAYS 10:00 pm MON-FRI 9:30 pm

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE Wednesday, December 15, 2004

LOOK WHO'S TALKING with Johnny Litton, Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Anton San Diego

ABC ibc 13 BIGNEWS with Chari Mercado-Santos and Amelyn Veloso

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2				Showbiz No. 1	Sandarai's Romance	Get Backers	Ragnarok	Masked Rider Ryuki	TV Patrol	Spirits	It Might Be You	Lovers In Paris	Krystala	Hiram	Star Circle Nati Teen Quest	Yes Yes Show		Insider	Special Assignment
NBN	Value Vision	Value Vision		Value Vision	Teledyanyo	Value Vision		Talk Ko 'To		Unya		Teledyanyo		Musconi Cup 2003				MMDA On The Road	
ABC 5	Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	PBA Game-Bol	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	Look Who's Talking		Philippine Badminton Tournaments	Billboard On-Air		Sakal
GMA 7	Laya (2:45 PM)	Joyride (3:15 PM)	Snow Angel (3:45 PM)		One Piece	Witch Hunter Robin	Slam Dunk	24 Oras		Extra Challenge		Mulawin	Starstruck (8:45 PM)	Forever In My Heart (9:15 PM)		Nuts Entertainment			Religious Filler
RPN 9	Metro TV Shopping			Direct Line		Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob	Entertainment Tonight	Scrubs	Everwood	Global Family Series	Ally McBeal		For Love Or Money		Newswatch Now	Corge For Truth	Breaking Barriers	
IBC 13		V League				IBC Express Balita		Home Shopping Network		Retro TV		Unawin Natin		D.E.N.R.		Retro TV	IBC News Tonite	WWE Confidential	
Solar		Wwe Heat		WWE Confidential		Streetfighter	Static Shock	Godzilla	Incredible Hulk	Invisible Man		Wwe Raw				Wwe Heat		The Wild Thornberrys	The Brother's Garcia
Nickelodeon	Dora, The Explorer	Little Bear	Blues Clues	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Brother's Garcia	Fairly Odd Parents	Rock MYX	As Told By Ginger	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	All That	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	Rocket Power	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
MYX		Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten	Entertainment Tonight	Mellow MYX	Good Morning Miami	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	MYX Live!		My MYX	MYX Backtrax	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel
ETC		Knock First	JOX	The Today Show		Starting Over		NBC Nightly News		Will & Grace		Miss World Part 2		Most My Folks		Tonight Show With Jay Leno		Anghel Sa Lupa	
Cinema One		Pulis Probinsya 2				Himala				Dr. X On The Air			Persona	Nasaan Ang Puso? (9:15 PM)					
Studio 23	Bewitched	Urban MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	Batman Animated Series	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Wazzup Wazzup	Mr. Bean	C.S.I.		The Amazing Race 6		News Central	The Oprah Winfrey Show		The Good Life With Cory Quirino
AXN		Fear Factor			Alias		Boarding Pass	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Boomtown		The Amazing Race		CSI: Miami		Fear Factor			Alias
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Ally McBeal		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Ed		Philly		Third Watch		Friends	Ed
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live	Young Global Hot Shots	World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic	On Assignment	Passport	Sunset Boulevard Of Dreams	Taboo		Extreme Latitude		The Snake Wranglers	Croc Chronicles Dr Brady Barr	Wild		About Asia	NBA TV Daily	Nati Geographic Specials		Passport		Taboo	
Solar Sports		US Open 9-Ball Chsnps Sfinal			GWS Ep.49	IBF German Open '04 WS Final			WTA Volvo Wymon's Open SF1					NBA New Orleans vs. Charlotte (play)					NBA Action
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Motto Motto	Sweat Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Wolfgang Puck's	E! Entertainment Special		E-News Weekend	Nigella Bites		Fine Living Special		Planet Parent	Good Eats
HBO	Infested (2:45 PM)			Getting There (4:10 PM)			Hometown Legend				The Presidio (7:25 PM)			XXX			Long Time Dead	About Schmidt (11:05PM)	
Star Movies				Uno			Tooth (5:45 PM)				Special Forces (7:20 PM)			In Hell					
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Richie Rich	Baby Looney Tunes	Sylvester & Tweety Mysteries	Police Academy	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Toon Titans	Yu-Gi-Oh!	Gundam Seed	The Looney Tunes Show		Courage The Cowardly Dog	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Addams Family	The Funky Phantom	Boomerang - Boomeraction	Yu-Gi-Oh!
ESPN			2004-05 Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball		Premier Snooker League '02 Fife, UK				Goals!	Sportscenter Taiwan	World Pool League '04 Warsaw, Poland Premier Snooker League '03 Sunderland, Eng				Sportscenter Taiwan				
Disney Channel	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Lizzie Maguire	Even Stevens	That's So Raven	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	The Legend Of Tarzan	Lilo & Stitch/Unleashing Bunny	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	According To Jim	America's Funniest Home Video	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax								The Russian Job			Cobra			The Naked Gun 21/2: The Smell Of Fear			Rollerball (10:25PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Mad About You	Grownups				Play With Me Sesame	Sesame Street		Bewitched	Mysterious Ways		Adoption		Dog Gone Love			Strong Medicine (10:35PM)		Mysterious Ways
Discovery Channel		Science Mysteries		Science Frontiers		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Hell In The Pacific Inferno		Sinyonam Changi		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Hour Asia	
MTV Philippines		MTV Dryss		Non-Stop Hits		Non-Stop Hits	05 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Get Spotted	MTV Loveline	MTV Superstar		MTV RockAd	Whatever Things	TRL		Room Raiders	One Bad Trip	VH1 Hits/ Video Collection	
Sports Plus					Porsche mid 18.2	Superbowl38 Dolphins vs Vikings		Golf Globe 2002	Pac 10 College Football USC at Oregon St.					Golf Academy 2002	Slipstream		NFL		
EWTN	Council Of Faith	Angelus (3.15 PM)	Refurbishing The Soul	The Donut Man	Faith Factory	The Holy Rosary With Mother Angelica and the Nuns Of Our Lady Of Angels Monastery	Saints For The Third Millenium	The Virtues	EWTN Gallery	Mother Angelica Live Classics		Qnie In Their Hearts	Pope Pius XII	Daily Mass		Angelus (10:15PM)	St. Catherine Of Sienna	Our Father's Plan	

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

TANONG NG BAYAN

BUWIS SA YOSI AT ALAK DAPAT BANG TAASAN?

WIN A 21" COLOR TV! TEXT 2910 NOW!

Ngayong Huwebes alas-10 ng gabi!

INQ INQ TV TV

Dito lang sa ABC

Dinig na ang hiling kong Christmas Reunion!!

PLDT IDD
INTERNATIONAL DIRECT DIALING

Tawag Mo, Pang-Reunion Ninyo

P75 PLDT IDD call mo, maaaring reunion nyo dito o saan mang bansang tinawagan mo!

Simpleng PLDT IDD tawag mo, baka reunion na ninyo!

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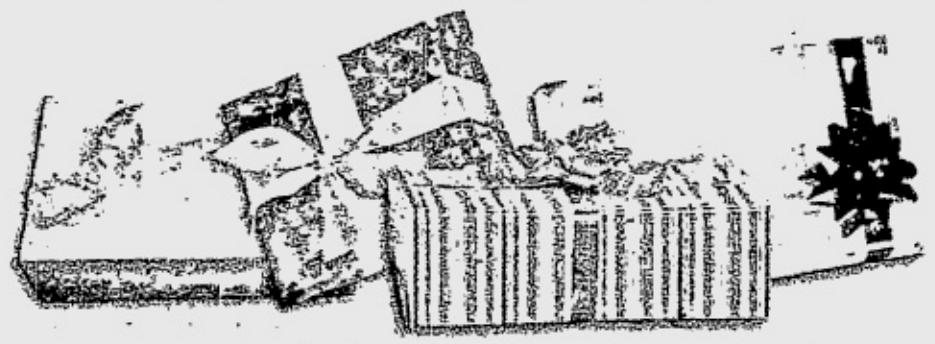

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Plans up to turn revenue units into GOCCs

By Michelle V. Remo

A PROPOSAL that will transform the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs into government-owned and-controlled corporations is expected to be filed with the Senate soon.

This is to pave the way for the approval and implementation of the proposed lateral attrition system, which will allow the government to fire under-performing revenue collectors.

The lateral attrition proposal, however, is being opposed by certain sectors on grounds that it would violate civil service laws.

A Finance official said Sen. Edgardo Angara had expressed intention to draft his own version of the lateral attrition bill to include provisions that would transform the two major revenue collection agencies of teh government into GOCCs.

If the BIR and the BOC were turned into GOCCs, the legality of the lateral attrition bill could not be questioned anymore, the finance official said.

Angara raised this proposal during last week's hearing on the lateral attrition bill at the Senate, said the DOF source, who was present during the hearing.

The DOF source said the legality of some of the provisions of the existing lateral attrition bill was being questioned because they were deemed in violation of civil service laws. One of the provisions being questions is the proposed creation of a Revenue Performance Evaluation Board (REPB), which will be tasked to set work objectives for employees of the BIR and the BOC and to decide on whether to fire or reward employees on their performance.

The finance official, who requested anonymity, said that the groups opposing this provision of the bill claimed that giving an REPB with such functions might result in an overlapping of authority with the Civil Service Commission, which currently decides on the fate of state workers in terms of job retention.

"The lateral attrition bill also goes against the law granting security of tenure to BIR and BOC employees," said a source.

The DOF said that if the bill was approved, the lateral attrition law would supersede the civil service law on security of tenure.

The lateral attrition bill, one of the revenue-raising measures proposed by the Arroyo administration, is a reward and punishment system that is expected to encourage BIR and BOC workers to meet or surpass their collection targets.

Some members of the BIR and BOC's employees' union have expressed opposition to the legislative proposal.

To prevent unnecessary delays in the deliberations of the bill and address questions on its legality, the DOF source said, removing the BIR and the BOC from the jurisdiction of the Civil Service Commission would be an appropriate move.

A new lateral attrition bill containing provisions transforming the two revenue-collecting agencies into GOCCs is expected to revive ear-

PLANS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

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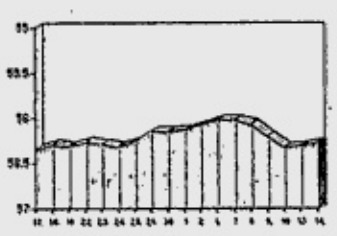


₱ 56.275 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 14, 2004

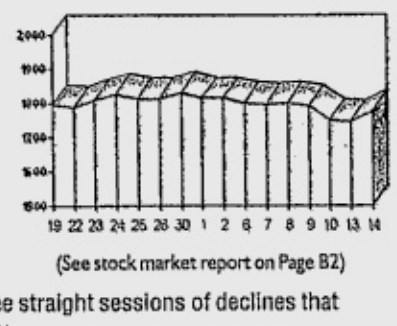
¥ 104.83 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 14, 2004

GOLD: $ 439.30-439.80
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 14, 2004

STOCK MARKET

Stocks up on rebound, window dressing

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

SHARES ended higher yesterday on a technical recovery after three sessions of losses, aided by year-end window dressing by investors, traders said.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index closed up 27.40 points, or 1.6 percent, at 1,775.73, following three straight sessions of declines that pared 2.9 percent from the index.

Gainers led decliners 42 to 17, while 46 stocks were unchanged.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was the most actively traded stock, up 2 percent at P1,260 , in step with the 2-percent rise of its American depositary receipts in New York Monday.

The rise of PLDT receipts added to Wall Street's rally, with the Dow Jones industrial average ending up 0.9 percent and the Nasdaq composite index gaining 1 percent.

Other stocks that recovered from the recent sell-off were Ayala Land, which closed up 1.5 percent at P6.70, and Globe Telecom, which rose 3.4 percent to P915.

San Miguel B was up 4 percent at P78.50 on mounting interest in the food and beverage conglomerate's upcoming stock offering, details of which will be announced next month.

The market's fate also depends on how fast the Philippine government implements fiscal reforms, traders said.

"The passage of the 'sin' taxes would improve market sentiment and raise hopes that government can successfully put in place much needed fiscal reform measures before ratings agencies make their move," said Citiseconline.com investment analyst Mark Alan Canizares.

The so-called sin taxes are levied on tobacco and alcoholic products, and form part of the government's package of tax measures to address its yawning budget deficit. ·AP

BIR misses 11-mo. collection target

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue missed its collection target for the first 11 months of the year by about P6 billion, keeping the agency away from meeting its full-year collection target of P477 billion.

Data from the BIR showed that for the 11-month period, revenue collection stood at only P427.02 billion, lower than the collection goal for the period of P432.76 billion.

The year-to-date collection figure means the BIR needs to generate about P50 billion in revenue in December, which is larger than the BIR's usual monthly collection, to achieve its P477-billion target for 2004.

But Revenue Deputy Commissioner Kim Henares said in a telephone interview that the revenue agency was still expecting to achieve its full-year collection goal.

"December is not yet over, and everyone is working double time to meet the goal. We will not surrender until the last day," she said.

The BIR official said the revenue agency was going after taxpayers who were accused of under-declaring their taxable incomes.

Henares said the BIR was expecting to collect from taxpayers, who were already furnished with their tax assessments, this month.

The BIR attributed the failure to meet its 11-month collection goal to loss of several revenue sources, such as the exemption from the documentary stamp tax of the electronic transactions of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and of the trading of stocks in the secondary market.

Henares said the BIR lost about P4 billion in potential revenue

BIR/ B2

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Consolidated public sector deficit*
(2001 to 1st quarter 2004, in percent)

*As percentage of gross domestic product
Source: Medium-Term Development Plan: 2004-2010

A KEY macroeconomic problem of the Philippines has been its chronic fiscal deficit with actual performance falling very short of its targets. Consolidated public sector deficit for the whole year is targeted to reach only 0.6 percent of gross domestic product. As of the first quarter, it has reached P51.1 billion which is 4.7 percent of GDP.

Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

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Atlas settles dispute with Toledo

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PUBLICLY-LISTED mining firm Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. said it has entered a compromise agreement with the Toledo City government in Cebu to settle its P100 million in tax liabilities.

Atlas disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange that the agreement provides for a cash payment of P5 million upon signing of the contract, and another P5 million upon the resumption of Atlas' copper mining operations.

The balance will be settled through the issuance of 1 million shares at P10 par and transfer of pieces of property in favor of the Toledo City government.

In its 39 years of operation, the Toledo mine produced 667 million tons of ore.

The mine was estimated to have about 881 million metric tons of recoverable reserves, containing 7.9 billion pounds of copper and 5 million ounces of gold.

Atlas Consolidated plans to diversify into non-mining businesses, including construction and a possible e-commerce venture in China.

Atlas used to be one of the country's largest copper producing companies along with Philex Mining Corp., but declining metal prices in the world market and the Asian currency crisis put a stop to its copper mining operations.

Atlas also said yesterday it will become a holding company with six subsidiaries hosting the copper operations, nickel interests, Cebu-Toledo water project, a portfolio of copper and nickel exploration properties and real estate projects in the Toledo-Cebu region.

Atlas has already incorporated a wholly-owned subsidiary, Carmen Copper Corp., as part of the diversification program.

Atlas said the reorganization will improve shareholder value, as well as its fiscal and funding position.

BIR misses . . .

From page B1

from DST exemptions.

"(These were) a substantial source of revenue for 2003, but were no longer collectible with the passage of Republic Act No. 9238 this year," said the BIR in a statement.

Aside from the DST exemption, the shift of the system of taxing banks from the 10-percent value-added tax to the 5-percent gross receipt tax also contributed to substantial revenue loss.

But while the BIR missed its 11-month target, it slightly surpassed its collection target for the month of November alone.

For the month, the BIR's collection stood at P43.95 billion, compared with the P43.84-billion November target.

The BIR is hard-pressed to meet its 2004 collection goal to ensure that the government will not exceed its budget deficit ceiling. *Michelle V. Remo*

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(As of December 14, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	24.25	24.25	24.25	24.25	436,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	50.5	51.5	50.5	51	1,791,600
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	48	48	48	48	7,300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	50,000
International Exch. Bank	17	17	16.5	16.5	134,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27.5	27.5	26	26.5	239,800
Philippine National Bank	22	22	22	22	100
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	15,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13	13	13	13	10,000
Security Bank Corp.	28	28.5	28	28.5	313,900
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	100
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	10,000
Bankard Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	40,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	2490	2495	2490	2495	230
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	112	112	111	111	600
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1800	1800	1800	1800	350
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	51,800
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.68	1.72	1.68	1.72	11,589,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	900	915	900	915	70,890
Ipeople Inc.	2.6	2.65	2.6	2.65	40,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	200,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.44	2.48	2.44	2.46	1,076,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1255	1265	1250	1260	200,930
Ivantage Corp.	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.71	200,000
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	3,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	16	16	16	16	88,700
Manila Electric Co. B	25	25.5	25	25.5	415,400
Petron Corp.	3.05	3.15	3.05	3.15	736,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	6,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	100,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.8	122,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	60,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.14	1.18	1.14	1.18	353,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	500,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	50,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.96	1.98	1.94	1.96	1,086,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	5,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	32	31.5	31.5	16,600
Jollibee Foods Corp.	29	29	28.5	28.5	21,300
Pancake House Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.34	1.34	42,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	57	57.5	78,600
San Miguel Corp. B	75.5	78.5	75.5	78.5	287,200
Vitarich Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	250,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	9,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	1,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.6	3,698,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	148,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	200,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	558,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	115,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	210,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.74	1.74	1.74	1.74	20,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.81	0.81	0.81	0.81	30,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	15.75	15.75	15.75	15.75	7,500
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.7	0.71	2,450,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	500,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.75	3.8	492,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	400,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.95	0.96	0.95	0.96	320,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.65	4.7	3,804,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	30	31	30	30.5	420,100
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.16	0.18	0.16	0.18	240,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	2.95	3.1	2.95	3.1	533,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.56	2.02	1.56	2.02	5,958,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.18	1,203,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.38	0.39	25,630,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.145	0.145	0.145	0.145	100,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	30,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	2.75	3	2.75	3	45,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.135	0.13	0.135	510,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	150,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Picop Resources, Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	0.0575	1,000,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.61	0.62	0.61	0.62	1,050,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.93	0.98	0.93	0.96	1,880,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	400,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	540,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	18.5	18.5	18.25	18.25	306,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.7	14,760,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	2,190,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	3,330,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	4,100,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	9,535,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.17	760,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	750,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.08	0.0825	0.08	0.08	1,200,000
SM Development Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.26	1.28	215,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.5	5,784,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.31	0.34	0.31	0.34	2,240,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc B	0.4	0.4	0.34	0.38	470,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	10,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	65,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3	3.3	3	3.3	114,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.245	0.26	0.245	0.26	9,640,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.36	0.36	0.34	0.35	9,350,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	319,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	249,800,000
Omico Corp.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	76,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.54	0.58	0.54	0.58	6,120,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.63	0.64	0.63	0.64	5,450,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.185	0.19	0.185	0.19	680,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	2,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	35,000,000

DISCLOSURES

FIRST Metro Investment Corp. appointed Christina Bautista senior vice president and deputy supervising head for domestic subsidiaries, effective Nov. 2.

***

HIGHLANDS Prime Inc. has moved to the SM Corporate offices. Starting Jan. 1, 2005, its new address will be: SM Corporate Offices, Building A, 1000 Bay Boulevard, SM Central Business Park, Bay City, Pasay City. The new contact number is 831-1000 local 1522/1523, while the new fax number is 551-6781.

***

LIBERTY Flour Mills Inc. declared a cash dividend of P0.50 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Dec. 24 and will be payable on Dec. 28.

***

ELECTED members to **Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp.**'s various committees were: Jose de Guzman, Noel del Castillo and Alfredo Rosal, audit committee; Felipe Reluclo Jr., del Castillo and Martin Buckingham, remuneration committee; Alfredo Ramos, Frank Lubbock and Reginald Hare, nomination committee. Also, the company entered into a compromise agreement to settle its P100 million worth of liabilities with the local government of Toledo City, Cebu. ***Compiled by D.J. Yap, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

December 14, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.751033	1.000000	56.3120
Japan	Yen	0.007172	0.009550	0.5378
United Kingdom	Pound	1.446113	1.925500	108.4288
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096593	0.128614	7.2425
Switzerland	Franc	0.651316	0.867227	48.8353
Canada	Dollar	0.611939	0.814797	45.8828
Singapore	Dollar	0.456139	0.607349	34.2010
Australia	Dollar	0.569223	0.757920	42.6800
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.992182	2.652590	149.3726
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200372	0.266795	15.0238
Brunei	Dollar	0.454758	0.605510	34.0975
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000081	0.000108	0.0061
Thailand	Baht	0.019086	0.025413	1.4311
UAE	Dirham	0.204490	0.272279	15.3326
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.331500	74.9794
Argentina	Peso	0.252448	0.336134	18.9284
Brazil	Real	0.271425	0.361402	20.3513
Denmark	Kroner	0.134608	0.179231	10.0929
India	Rupee	0.017011	0.022650	1.2755
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.197667	0.263193	14.8209
Mexico	New Peso	0.066702	0.088814	5.0013
New Zealand	Dollar	0.532345	0.708818	39.9150
South Africa	Rand	0.130934	0.174338	9.8173
Korea	Won	0.000710	0.000945	0.0532
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023274	0.030989	1.7451

Plans up . . .

From page B1

lier proposals to reform the BIR.

The National Revenue Authority (Nara) bill, which was filed in Congress but was later shelved, sought to "corporatize" the BIR for the purpose of improving its collection efficiency and curb corruption.

The Nara bill, which was also opposed by some BIR employees, likewise called for the setting of performance targets for internal revenue workers.

The lateral attrition bill, being pushed by the Arroyo administration is expected to generate P10 billion in additional revenue a year.

Ayalas win over Madrigals

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE AYALAS will have finally closed the soured '80s-era Ayala Alabang deal that they had signed with the Vasquez wing of the fellow landed Madrigal family.

The Supreme Court's Second Division has dismissed the petition filed by Dr. Daniel Vasquez and Maria Luiza Madrigal-Vasquez seeking to compel Ayala Corp. to sell them back four Alabang lots at 1984 prices, instead of the 1990 prices that Ayala had proposed.

The lots were part of the 49.9-hectare Madrigal property that the family sold to Ayala in the early 1980s to develop what is now Ayala Alabang.

The high court ruled, among other things, that the Vasquezes failed to make a real demand, as provided in their memorandum of agreement, for Ayala to sell back the lots in 1984, but waited until 1990 when Ayala had finished development of the so-called Phase 3 of the exclusive subdivision.

Besides, what the Vasquezes signed with Ayala was a right of first refusal, not an option contract, "there being no separate consideration thereof," *ponente* Justice Dante Tinga said.

Ayalas all aglow

THE ZOBEL brothers Jaime Augusto and Fernando have millions of reasons to enjoy the nightly fireworks and Yuletide festivities in the dazzling Ayala Center.

The heirs have widened their pre-holiday stock options disposal not only in Ayala Land but also in the family-controlled holding company, Ayala Corp.

Jaime Augusto on Nov. 26 sold two million AC shares at P6.30 a share out of his 5,799,920 personal shareholdings. The exercise should have stuffed P12.6 million in the Christmas stocking of the Ayala Corp. president and chief executive officer.

A week later, his younger brother Fernando followed suit, disposing of 250,000 AC shares at P6.40 each, before monetizing last week an additional 1.49 million more between P6.40 and P6.60 a share.

After the cash-out, Fernando reported he still had over 1.72 million in AC shares left in his own name.

Since Halloween, Fernando has disposed of 1.986 million Ayala Land shares at the P7.10-P7.30/share range, while Jaime Augusto sold a more restrained 176,611 shares.

In all, Fernando would have raised over P25.5 million from the combined AC and ALI sales, while Jaime Augusto would have grossed a more modest P13.85 million.

The Zobels' selling spree prompted other Ayala executives to follow their bosses.

ALI senior vice president Angela Lacson sold exactly 342,694 ALI shares she just obtained from the employee stock option plan, while vice president Maria Victoria Añonuevo disposed a total of 206,353 shares, the entire lot.

Corporate secretary Mercedita Nolledo even preceded her principals in the selling spree, executing 14 sales transactions since October to dispose of a total of 1,654,580 ALI shares.

Strangely, the male ALI executives seem to be of a more parsimonious bent.

Chief financial officer Jaime Ysmael has kept the over 165,000 shares he had obtained from the same ESOP batch. And so did SVP Manuel Colayco Jr. with his 323,140 shares.

Vice president Raul Irlanda sold only 12,664 out of the 193,628 shares he had availed himself of.

Even the two just retired presidents, Francisco Licuanan III of ALI and Xavier Loinaz of Bank of the Philippine Islands, have so far kept the latest tranche of Ayala Corp. shares—184,896 for Licuanan and 951,901 for Loinaz—they had obtained before their employment ended.

Heard through the grapevine

THE BAGUIO Country Club has been ordered to pay P10 million in damages to a corporate member, Multinational Investment Bancorporation, after Baguio Regional Trial Court Judge Clifton Ganay ruled as harassment the damage suit the BCC board had filed against the investment bank.

Incidentally, Ganay, winner of this year's Gender Justice award, only last month awarded P7 million damages to the club against a suing female member.

(Please take note of our new email address: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

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- ❑ *Are you afflicted with dandruff build-up?*
- ❑ *Do you have greasy hair with an oily scalp?*
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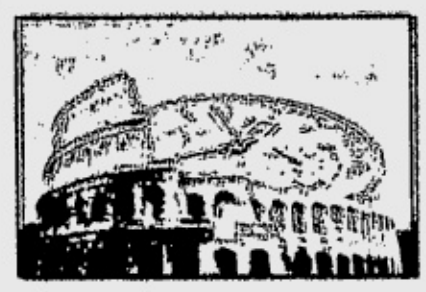
Reflecting on Time
Colosseum



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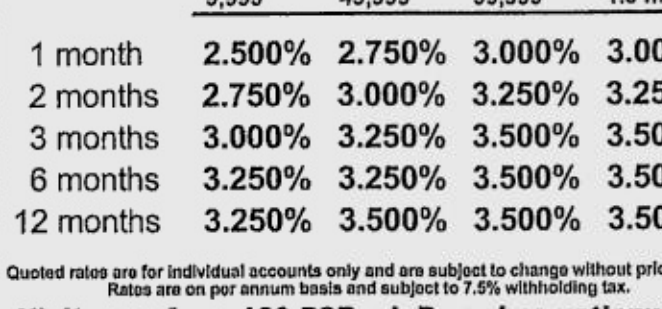
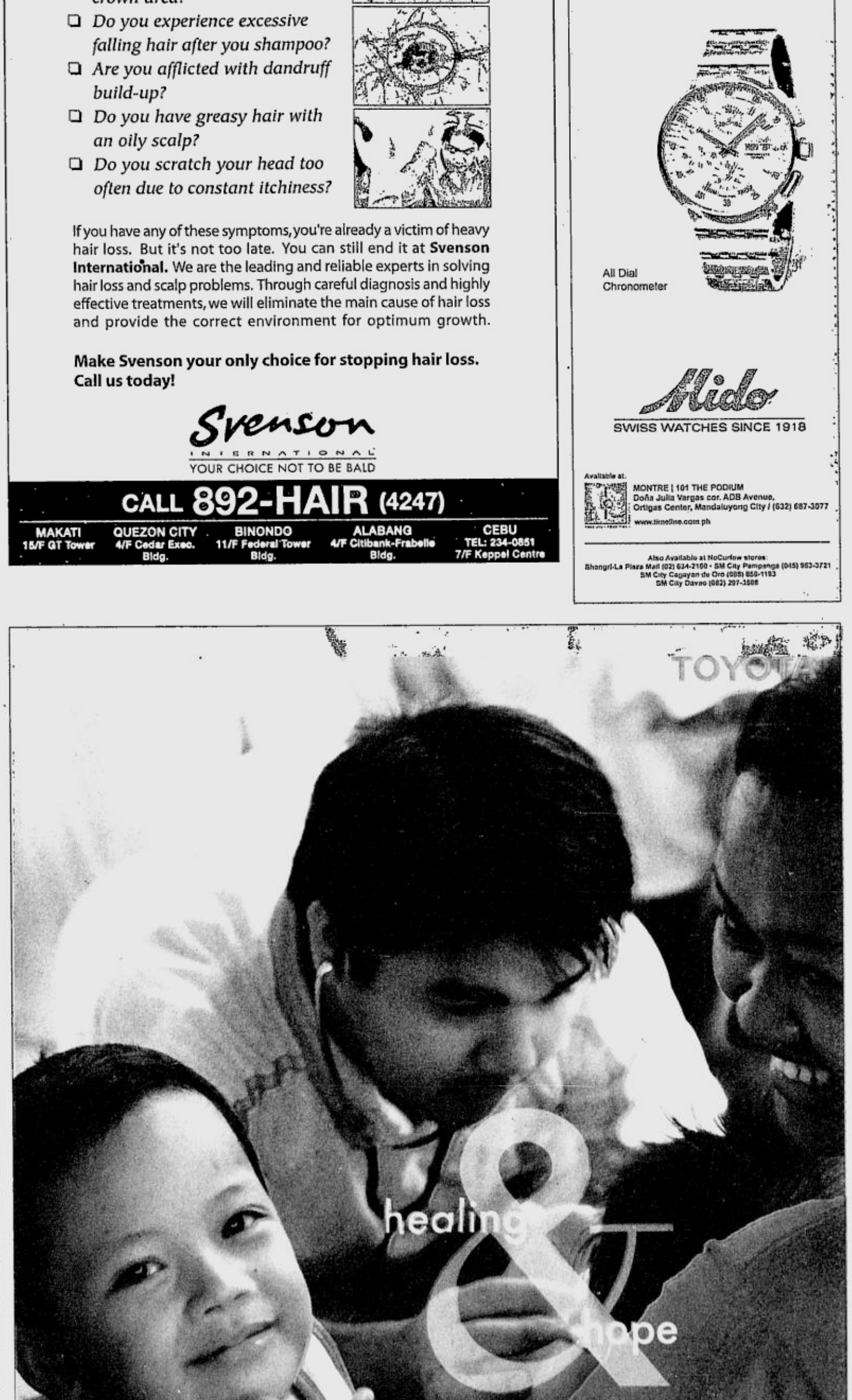




Oil firms hold off gasoline, diesel price rollbacks

By Abigail L. Ho

OIL firms may have rolled back prices of their liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), but they are not expected to do the same for gasoline, diesel and kerosene.

According to Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. country chair Edgardo Chua, it was difficult to speculate on further price rollbacks at this time as there were so many factors to consider, including the recent decision of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to cut production by one million barrels a day starting Jan. 1, 2005 and government's move to slap additional taxes on the oil industry.

Global demand should also be considered, he said, as the winter season usually drives up prices.

"If it's a very cold winter and demand is high, particularly in China, then prices will be affected. But it's really difficult to speculate. Prices are very much uncertain at this time," he told the INQUIRER.

He added that the "fear factor," referring to fears of supply disruptions due to threats of terrorism on Iraq and other Middle Eastern oil producers, still weigh heavily on prices of crude and finished petroleum products.

Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association chair Fernando Martinez said in a separate interview that it was close to impossible for oil firms to roll back fuel prices as they still had some under-recoveries that never had the chance to be reflected on pump prices.

The Department of Energy, on the other hand, said fuel price rollbacks could already be implemented at this time as world crude and refined petroleum product prices had started to decline.

The benchmark Dubai crude went down to a Dec. 1-12 average of $33.55 a barrel from last month's $34.87 a barrel.

Unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) benchmark for refined petroleum products had likewise gone down to a December average of $45.82 a barrel from $52.44 a barrel last month.

The price of MOPS-based diesel likewise declined to $50.92 a barrel in the first 14 days of December from a high $56.02 a barrel in November.

The contract price of LPG also followed the downtrend, going down to $424 per metric ton (MT) this month from $470 per MT last month.

"We can't commit yet. We can't give false expectations to consumers," Shell's Chua said.

Cable TV players switch to set-up boxes

By Clarissa S. Batino

ABOUT 80 percent of cable television players are expected to raise funds so they can shift to set-up boxes in the next five years to address growing concerns on theft and piracy, the president of the Philippine Cable Television Association said.

PCTA president Tony Selda said that cable players would have to borrow money or invite additional investments to purchase set-up boxes as well as encryptors.

The set-up boxes are expected to curb theft within its network.

Brand-new set-up boxes costs between $60 to $100 each, while the second-hand between $20 and $30, according to the PCTA chief. Encryptors, on the other hand, between $1,500 and $2,000 each.

Cable TV firms would have to buy one encryptor for every cable channel to prevent piracy.

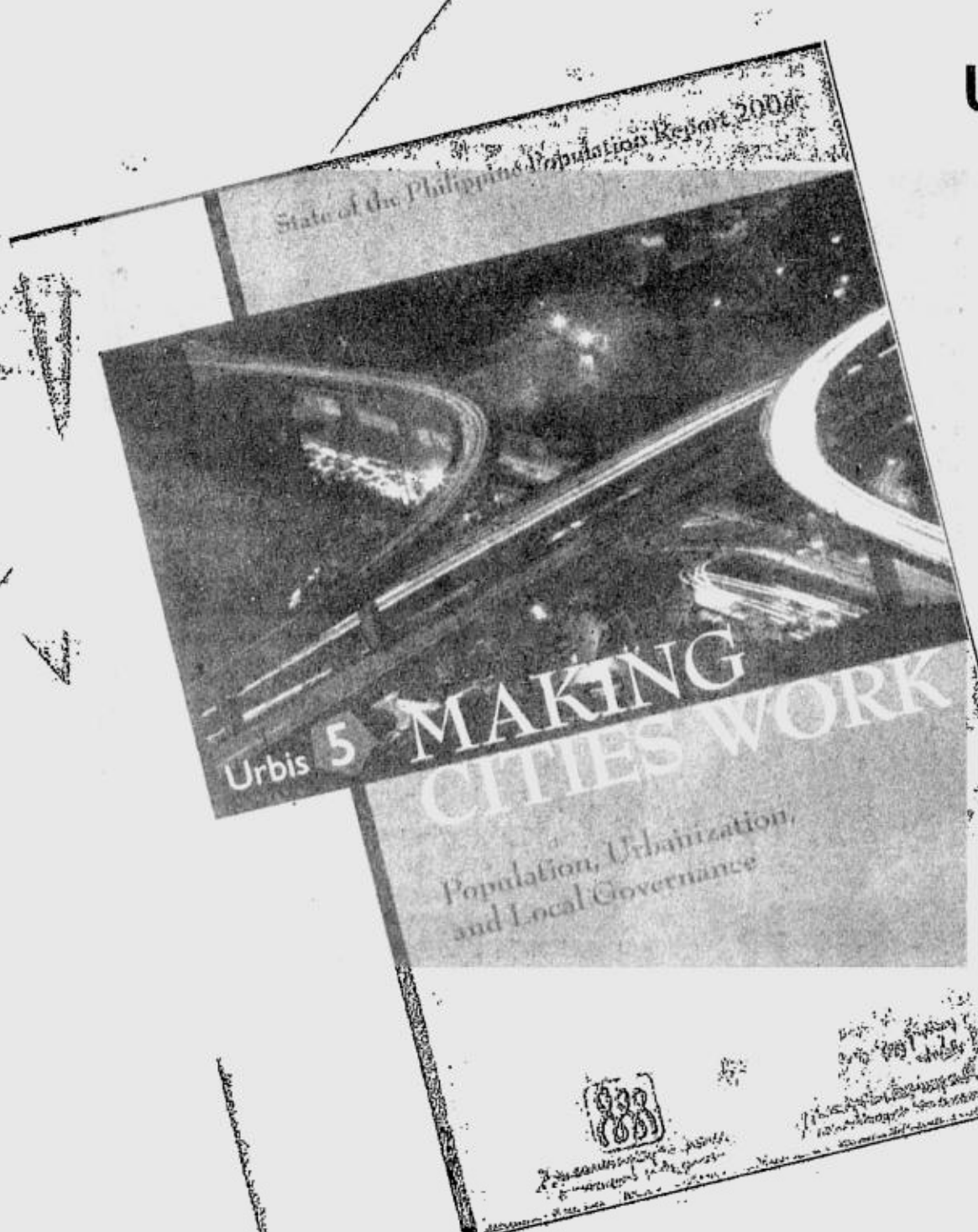
Unlike cable that can be easily connected and linked to illegal customers, a set-up box would receive only the signals ordered by the customer.

The use of set-up boxes would also allow cable players to offer a more efficient packages for the subscribers.

"A cable player could charge a basic rate then charge an additional fee for every additional channel. So you pay only for what you want to watch," Selda explained.

There are about a million cable subscribers in the country and another one million that are illegally connected.

Launch of the
State of the Philippine Population Report 2004



Urbis 5: Making Cities Work
Population, Urbanization, and Local Governance

December 15, 2004
Hyatt Hotel; Manila

Commission on Population

United Nations Population Fund

Planholders threaten CAP over tuition payments

SEC may give in to pre-need firm's proposal to draw ₱110 million from Veterans Bank

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A GROUP of College Assurance Plan Philippines Inc. (CAP) planholders are threatening to continue to stake out the Makati office of the pre-need firm to press their demand for the payment of tuition fees.

After a hearing at the Lower House yesterday, Samuel Ramos, spokesperson for the group called CAP-US (Uncle Sam), said the group would continue to go to CAP to make sure the pre-need firm would make good its promise to pay planholders.

Ramos said he and about 300 other planholders decided to form the group three days ago to protest CAP's issuance of checks that reportedly bounced.

Some of the planholders have also expressed their disappointment over the dismal manner by which the checks have been issued.

"Our children were supposed to take their preliminary exams this semester," Ramos told the House Committee on Banks and Intermediaries chaired by Manila Rep. Jaime Lopez. "What will happen to our children? We will not allow our children to stop schooling just because of (the) mismanagement of CAP."

Ramos yesterday also told the committee that about 200 planholders were at the CAP building waiting to be paid.

"The tension is great (at the CAP buiding) every bloody day," he told the panel. "At the end of the day we don't have the money. Many are coming from the provinces. Can you imagine how many trips they have to make to CAP?"

But Bobby Cafe, CAP first vice-president, yesterday assured planholders during the hearing that CAP would not run away from its obligation to pay tuition fees.

CAP yesterday was supposed to pay planholders some P8.3 million in tuition.

Instead, CAP would meet with planholders this morning to work out how to settle the payments.

Securities and Exchange Commission chair Fe Barin said the SEC would consider CAP's proposal to draw P110 million in funds in the pre-need firm's trustee bank, Philippine Veterans Bank (PVB).

But she said that the proposal would have to pass through the Commission en banc, the policy-setting body of the SEC.

At press time, the Commission was still locked in a special meeting to discuss its move over CAP's proposal.

Barin said it is likely that if the funds were released, it would be in five tranches to make sure the amount would go directly to planholders.

CAP this semester owes various schools about P160 million.

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Constitutional amendments urgent—Neda

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL Economic and Development Authority (Neda) has reiterated its call for amendments in the Constitution, saying that making the charter adapt to present economic needs was vital to achieving the country's medium-term growth targets.

The Neda said that after government implements the Arroyo administration's proposed revenue-raising measures intended to solve its fiscal problem, moving on to amend the Constitution will be a complementary move to attain a vibrant economy.

Neda Director General Romulo Neri cited four constitutional reforms needed to meet the goals stated under the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP).

These are the shift to a federal form of government, shift to a unicameral parliamentary system, loosening of restrictive provisions on national economy and patrimony and changes in the political party system.

"The key to success of the plan is wider participation of local government units. These constitutional reforms will help us develop stronger local governance, among other objectives," said Neri in an interview after his speech on the MTPDP during yesterday's assembly of the League of Cities of the Philippines.

Neri, who is also the country's economic planning secretary, said the suggested charter amendments are also aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and accountability of political parties, and encourage the entry of more investments.

The attainment of these objectives, he said, would help pave the way for the realization of the goals of the MTPDP, including a 7-8-percent gross domestic product growth (GDP), an investment to GDP ratio of about 28 percent, and a zero budget deficit by the national government all by 2010, and export earnings of more than $50 billion by 2006.

BOI, DOF urged to break fiscal policy impasse

CONGRESS is urging the Board of Investments (BOI) and the Department of Finance (DOF) to consolidate into one bill their respective proposals on fiscal incentives—a move that could fast-track the passage of the measure to reduce the perks.

The BOI has presented a proposal totally different from the DOF: the BOI wants to rationalize the fiscal incentives granted to BOI-registered business, while the DOF seeks to cancel several incentives granted under special laws.

According to a government source, Congress wants the BOI and DOF bills to be consolidated since they focus on the rationalization of the granting of fiscal incentives to businesses.

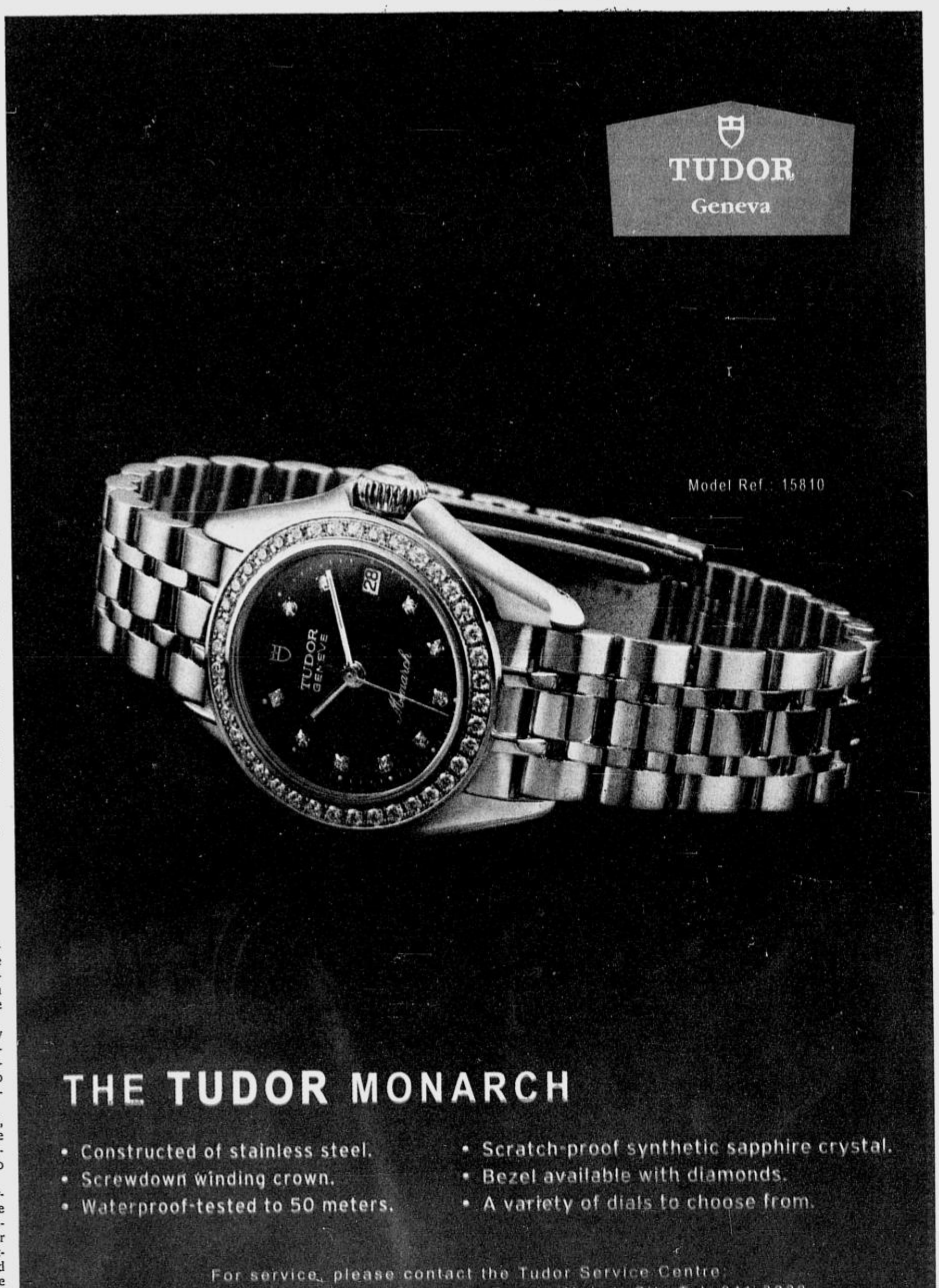
The DOF and the BOI have been at loggerheads over the issue. Responsible for easing the government's fiscal problem, the DOF is pushing for a reduction of incentives. On the other hand, the BOI, which is tasked to attract investments, said incentives should be rationalized but must not be substantially reduced because they are necessary to boost business activities.

The DOF earlier expressed fears that the BOI bill, instead of reducing the amount of foregone revenue from the granting of fiscal incentives, would actually bloat the government's revenue losses from tax and duty perks.

For its part, the BOI is insisting that incentives should not be considered as forgone revenues because, if not for the investments they helped generate, there will be no businesses to tax, officials said.

Representative Junie Cua made the proposal to consolidate the BOI and DOF bills. According to the government source, Cua believes that the BOI's bill has to be combined with that of the DOF's to fulfill its purpose of reducing tax perks.

"If (the bills) are not combined, then ... we could not expect to generate additional revenue, but instead give away more incentives," the source said. *Michelle V. Remo*



JBIC takes a step back from Subic-Clark project commitment

Ronnel W. Domingo

THE JAPAN Bank for International Cooperation has taken a step back from its commitment to pay for the construction of the Subic-Clark-Tarlac highway, and refused to green-light the project.

JBIC officials said that they first needed an assurance that they would not pay for some P2.3 billion in taxes and duties arising from the highway construction.

The project's proponent, Bases Conversion Development Authority, is awaiting JBIC's concurrence for its choice of contractors after a long-drawn bidding process that ended last October.

JBIC is providing 85 percent of the project's funding through a 41.9-billion-yen loan package. The package would cover civil works and procurement of equipment, consulting services and contingencies.

The rest would come from the government as a counterpart fund.

Antonio Rex Chan, BCDA vice president for operations, said in a press briefing that the project would incur P700 million in value-added taxes and duties on imported capital equipment and consultancy work in the first year alone.

The P21-billion project is expected to take three years to complete.

Chan said the BCDA was trying to secure from the Bureau of Internal Revenue a deferred payment scheme for the taxes and duties.

"If we cannot (secure that), the BCDA may have to shoulder the taxes and duties, which it is willing to do," Chan said.

The 94.5-kilometer highway has two portions: the 50.5-km first leg which costs P12.7 billion; and the 44-km second leg would cost P8.2 billion.

Both would consist of four-lane asphalt concrete pavement with asphalt overlay.

The project includes a total of four major bridges spanning the rivers of Gumain, Porac, Pasig-Potrero and Sacobia-Bamban, aside from eight interchanges, 35 minor bridges and 13 overpasses.

IMPORTANT ADVISORY FOR WEST ZONE CUSTOMERS

Due to the high turbidity (or sediment) level of the raw water coming from Angat Dam caused by the recent typhoons, Maynilad Water has to reduce the volume of water that our La Mesa Treatment Plant No. 1 processes and distributes to our water network since December 11, 2004.

As a result, our daily water production output of 2250 million liters a day (MLD) is reduced by 25 %, to 1900 MLD. This has left elevated portions of Quezon City, Valenzuela, Malabon, Navotas, Caloocan, Manila and Pasay without water or with low water pressure. The reduction is resorted to in order to allow our treatment plant to cope with the high turbidity.

In some areas, this high turbidity level may result in a brownish discoloration of the water. Despite this, we assure our customers the treated water coming out from our La Mesa Treatment Plant is safe, does not have bacteriological contents, and conforms to the national standards for drinking water. To avoid the entry of dirty water into our pipelines, especially where there are illegal connections, we urge our customers not to use booster pumps.

To cope with the reduced supply, Maynilad has fielded 50 mobile tankers to deliver water to affected areas. Affected residents may call the Maynilad Hotline 1626 for water deliveries.

We apologize to our customers for this unforeseen event which is totally beyond our control.

In the meantime, we are doing everything to be able to restore water supply to normal levels as soon as possible.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that pursuant to the Order dated 25 November 2004 issued by Hon. Meliton G. Emuslan, Pairing Judge of Regional Trial Court of Urdaneta City Branch 48 in Intra-Corporate Case No SCC-2847 entitled *"Cezar T. Quiambao, et al. vs. Strategic Alliance Development Corp. et al.,"* a Special Annual Stockholders' Meeting of Strategic Alliance Development Corporation was held on 10 December 2004 at the STRADEC Office, Poblacion Sur, Bayambang, Pangasinan, during which the following Stockholders were elected as Members of the Board of Directors for the term 2004-2005, to hold office as such until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified, to wit:

Cezar T. Quiambao
Anthony K. Quiambao
Simplicio T. Quiambao Jr.

Municipality of Bayambang, Pangasinan; 10 December 2004.

(Sgd) JEFFREY P. PUNZALAN
Secretary of the Meeting

Attested by:

(Sgd) CEZAR T. QUIAMBAO
Presiding Officer of the Meeting

(Sgd) ATTY. RUSTY M. NAYA
Branch Clerk of Court
RTC Urdaneta City Branch 48

Strategic Alliance Development Corporation
Quezon Blvd., Poblacion Sur, Bayambang, Pangasinan
Telephone : (075) 592-3286 * (075) 592-2297

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that:

1. On 10 December 2004, pursuant to the Order dated 25 November 2004 issued by Hon. Meliton G. Emuslan, Pairing Judge of Regional Trial Court of Urdaneta City Branch 48 in Intra-Corporate Case No SCC-2847 entitled *"Cezar T. Quiambao, et al. vs. Strategic Alliance Development Corp, et al.,"* a Special Annual Stockholders' Meeting of Strategic Alliance Development Corporation was held on 10 December 2004 at the STRADEC Office, Poblacion Sur, Bayambang, Pangasinan, during which the following Stockholders were elected as Members of the Board of Directors for the term 2004-2005, to hold office as such until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified, to wit:

   Cezar T. Quiambao
   Anthony K. Quiambao
   Simplicio T. Quiambao Jr.

2. Immediately after the adjournment of the Special Annual Stockholders' Meeting, the newly elected Members of the Board of Directors held their Organizational Meeting, during which, among others, the following Corporate Officers were elected for the term 2004-2005, to hold office as such until their successors shall have been duly elected and qualified, to wit:

   Cezar T. Quiambao - Chairman and President
   Anthony K. Quiambao - Treasurer
   Eric C. Pilapil - Corporate Secretary
   Albert M. Rasalan - Assistant Corporate Secretary

Municipality of Bayambang, Pangasinan; 10 December 2004.

(Sgd) ALBERT M. RASALAN
Assistant Corporate Secretary

NATA DE COCO WIZ

Making it big in Japan

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

FESTIVE Foods International Inc. was there when the nata de coco craze was at its zenith in the late 1990s, and it is leading efforts to take the industry back there again.

Behind the moves is businessman Philip C. Young, who grew up surrounded by food, and learned the ropes at the feet of his parents who used to operate the biggest manufacturing facility for banana chips, which were sold here and overseas.

Young said in an interview that while he and his family were happy with the sales of banana chips, they quickly figured out in the mid-1980s that they needed to come up with new products, since sales of banana chips had their peaks and valleys.

They particularly needed a product to fill in the summer months, and the answer came in the form of halo-halo ingredients. This led to the phenomenal growth of the line of halo-halo ingredients and desserts sold under the Jona's brand.

From tropical fruit preserves to ethnic food products, such as *kaong* and red beans, Jona's became the by-word for Filipino desserts in a bottle. These products have filled the tables of homes, not just in the Philippines, but also in 20 other countries.

The Young family's passion for excellence, spanning over 50 years in the food business, may be tasted in every spoonful of Filipino products, thus, winning for Jona's the Department of Trade and Industry's Golden Shell Award in 1989.

IN THE 1990s, Jona's tasty, chewy gel took Japan by storm.

Acid test

Among the most popular of the halo-halo ingredients was nata de coco, and ever the innovator, Young thought of bringing that unique Filipino ingredient to the giant export market of Japan.

Penetrating the Japanese export market became the acid test of Young's patience and perseverance as Japan's rules are among the most stringent in the world.

"They really liked the texture of our nata de coco, because it reminded them of the texture of the baby octopus," Young said. "But they found it very sweet, so we had to make some changes before we passed their tests."

Getting just the right taste and texture for the nata de coco took all of eight years, but Young eventually made it.

By 1993, Jona's nata de coco made it big in Japan, making it the first Filipino company to pass Japan's strict quality standards.

Preferred refreshment

Jona's eventually led in nata de coco product innovation, from the regular 15 mm cut, to small cuts of 10 mm, 7.5 mm, miniature 5 mm and strings.

It was Jona's that made the Japanese accept the soft, chewy gel as a health food, until it became a regular fare in everyday meals.

After making a success of the nata de coco, Jona's followed it up with other Filipino ingredients. Halo-halo then became the preferred refreshment by even non-Filipinos in Japan.

"There was a big craze for nata de coco because the Japanese liked the taste and its health benefits because it is from coconut," he said. "From a zero export market, we hit about $25 million in the mid-1990s."

Nata de coco, however, became the victim of its own success.

Couldn't get enough

Since the Japanese couldn't get enough of nata de coco, all sorts of exporters jumped on the export bandwagon and flooded the market with the product, even those of inferior quality.

SUCCESS STORY

In just two years, the Philippines' reputation in the nata de coco market was tarnished, and markets dried up as quickly as they surfaced, leaving many Filipino backyard entrepreneurs with vats full of unsold nata de coco.

Jona's sales were affected, but it still managed to export to Japan. After years in the doldrums, the nata de coco market is showing signs of resurgence, primarily due to the health craze sweeping Japan and the rest of the industrialized countries.

"It took about two years for the market to recover and we took that time to continue improving our products," Young said. "We listened to our customers and we took their suggestions to heart. That was why we continued to sell nata de coco."

Stiff competition

But according to Young, the Philippines now faces stiff competition from other countries that filled the market when the Philippines had to take a step back. These include Thailand and Indonesia.

Young has since assumed an active role in getting the industry players together to take advantage of the reopening of the Japanese market to nata de coco.

Young heads the Philippine Nata de Coco Industries and was responsible for reactivating the Nata de Coco Technical Working Group, which has worked with agencies like the Department of Science and Technology.

The Nata de Coco TWG aims to study the mistakes of the past and restore the Philippines' position as the leading exporter of the best quality nata de coco in the world market.

Only the best

Young said there are moves, for instance, to come up with standards and an accreditation process to ensure that only good raw materials go into the finished product, and only the best nata de coco makes it in the world market.

"In order to improve the industry, we have to improve the raw material source," Young said.

Continuous improvement and striking while opportunities are hot underline the success of Festive Foods and its line of food products.

Aside from Jona's, Festive Foods also distributes the Fiesta brand of sweet fruit preserves and the Orient's Delights line of fruits, vegetables and noodles.

With the consolidation of the former Jona's International Philippines, Cathay Pacific Multi-Commodities Corp. and Philexson International Inc. under a new and reinvigorated management team, Festive Foods looks forward to more happy times ahead.

Jona's Foods bread-and-butter line—coco products in all shapes, textures and sizes.

INCREASED TRADE

PPA, Guangzhou Port ink 'sister port' pact

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT expects an increase in the traffic of goods between the country and China as the Philippine Port Authority and Guangzhou Port Authority signed on Nov. 29 a sister port agreement.

The pact—realized within a year after the signing of a memorandum of intent—would facilitate the shipment of goods between Guangzhou and the ports of Manila and Davao.

The Guangzhou port is China's second biggest and the world's eighth in terms of throughput. Situated in the Pearl River and Delta regions, it is currently one of the most active ports in the world.

Further, the Guangzhou port covers six port districts—Inner Port, Huangpu, Xingang, Xinsha, Nansha and Outer Humen—and has at least 557 berths.

Guangzhou has already established similar pacts with seven other major foreign ports, including those in Baltimore in the United States.

Under the agreement, the ports would implement exchange programs concerning port technology and management.

"For our bilateral trade to further prosper, we need to gain access to international markets like China, whose unprecedented economic growth would open doors to immense opportunities to its neighbors," Trade Undersecretary Thomas G. Aquino said.

Aquino added that the sister port deal would foster closer ties with China through strengthened trade promotion and increased sea traffic.

The move to initiate a sister port deal began two years ago when Philippine Coconut Fiber Export Producers Association sent a mission to China to explore the possibility of chartering Chinese vessels in bringing products from the Visayas and Mindanao to China.

China ranked as the Philippines' sixth-largest trading partner, accounting for $3.94 billion or 5.4 percent of total trade in 2003, which has grown from $1.61 billion in 1999.

In the same year, China was the country's eighth-largest export market and sixth-largest supplier of imports.

Exports outpaced import growth at a yearly average of about 40 percent to $2.14 billion in 2003 from $575 million in 1999.

Since the Philippines revived active commercial relations with China in 1976, last year's performance was only the third time when trade surplus was achieved in favor of the country.

Metrobank sets next auction

METROPOLITAN Bank and Trust Co. (Metrobank), the country's biggest bank, sold assets worth more than P58 million in its first public auction last Oct. 28.

CB Richard Ellis, Metrobank's auction manager said majority of the assets sold were residential house and lots and some commercial and condominium units.

Buoyed by the results of this auction, Metrobank is setting another auction on Dec.16, Thursday at 2 p.m. in Salcedo Village, Makati.

Metrobank plans to put up 120 idle assets up for auction.

CB Richard Ellis is targeting institutional and private investors for these assets.

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Blackout shows urgency of Transco privatization,says DOE

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy lauded National Transmission Corp. (Transco) for the speedy restoration of electricity in Mindanao following a system-wide blackout last Monday.

The blackout rendered 95 percent of the island without power for close to three hours.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said the swift return of power supply showed that Transco "has done a good job in improving the reliability of the Mindanao transmission grid and in putting in place the needed protection systems."

The incident, however, also underscored the urgent need to continually improve and upgrade the country's power transmission network, Perez added.

Transco, however, can only do so much with its current financial resources, he said. Fresh funds from private investors are urgently needed to support the upgrade and expansion, Perez underscored.

In earlier nationwide radio interviews, Transco president Dr. Alan T. Ortiz echoed Perez' statement, stressing that the national government does not have sufficient funds for the continuing improvement and upgrade of the country's transmission system.

"We urgently need to privatize Transco to ensure that we can protect and upgrade its assets and therefore assure the country of continuing reliable power supply," Ortiz said.

Ortiz, however, clarified that the government "is not selling Transco outright, but is merely looking for a private concessionaire." The private investor, he said, will manage the assets and bring in the fresh funds needed for the maintenance and improvement of the present system, and the installation of new transmission lines and facilities.

Congress set to probe Masinloc plant bidding

By Gil C. Cabcungan Jr.

CONGRESS will look into the bidding of the Masinloc coal power plant won by a little-known Filipino-Australian consortium.

Congress specifically wants to look into the winning bidder's capability to deliver on its $561 million bid and its links with the Lopez group, which controls the country's biggest power utility, Manila Electric Co.

In a statement, Bayan Muna Representative Teddy Casino said the winning bidder—YNN Pacific Consortium Inc.—was just a "four-month old financial broker whose financial capacity and inadequate experience in operating the plant has been questioned by several experts in the finance and energy sectors." Casino led a group of party-list congressmen in filing House Resolution No. 468 which called for a probe on the Dec. 3 Masinloc bidding.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda had questioned why the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management (Psalm) pre-qualified the YNN consortium to bid for one of the National Power Corp.'s crown jewels despite its modest resources.

Salceda claimed that the YNN consortium had been peddling the project to other power providers and bankers in a bid to raise cash for the $21 million upfront payment and the 40 percent downpayment (the remaining 60 percent is payable in two years) but no one has so far taken its offer.

The Filipino partner, YNN Holdings Corp., has a paid-up capital of only P625,000 while its Australian partner, Green Pacific Energy Ltd., had a market capitalization of only $10 million. Casino said that this "indicates that the winning bidder may have been grossly undercapitalized."

Casino bared that YNN's owner, Sunny Sun, was also a shareholder of Duracom Mobile Power Corp. (Duracom), one of four Independent Power Producers (IPPs) supplying electricity to Meralco. The only other bidder for Masinloc was First Generation Holdings Inc. of the Lopez group which offered $288 million.

But FirstGen senior vice president Ernie Pantangco denied that his company or the Lopez group would benefit from YNN's winning bid. "We don't have any dealings with YNN or Duracom." He said FirstGen would not get Masinloc if YNN fails to come up with the money because "we did not meet the reserve price" set by government.

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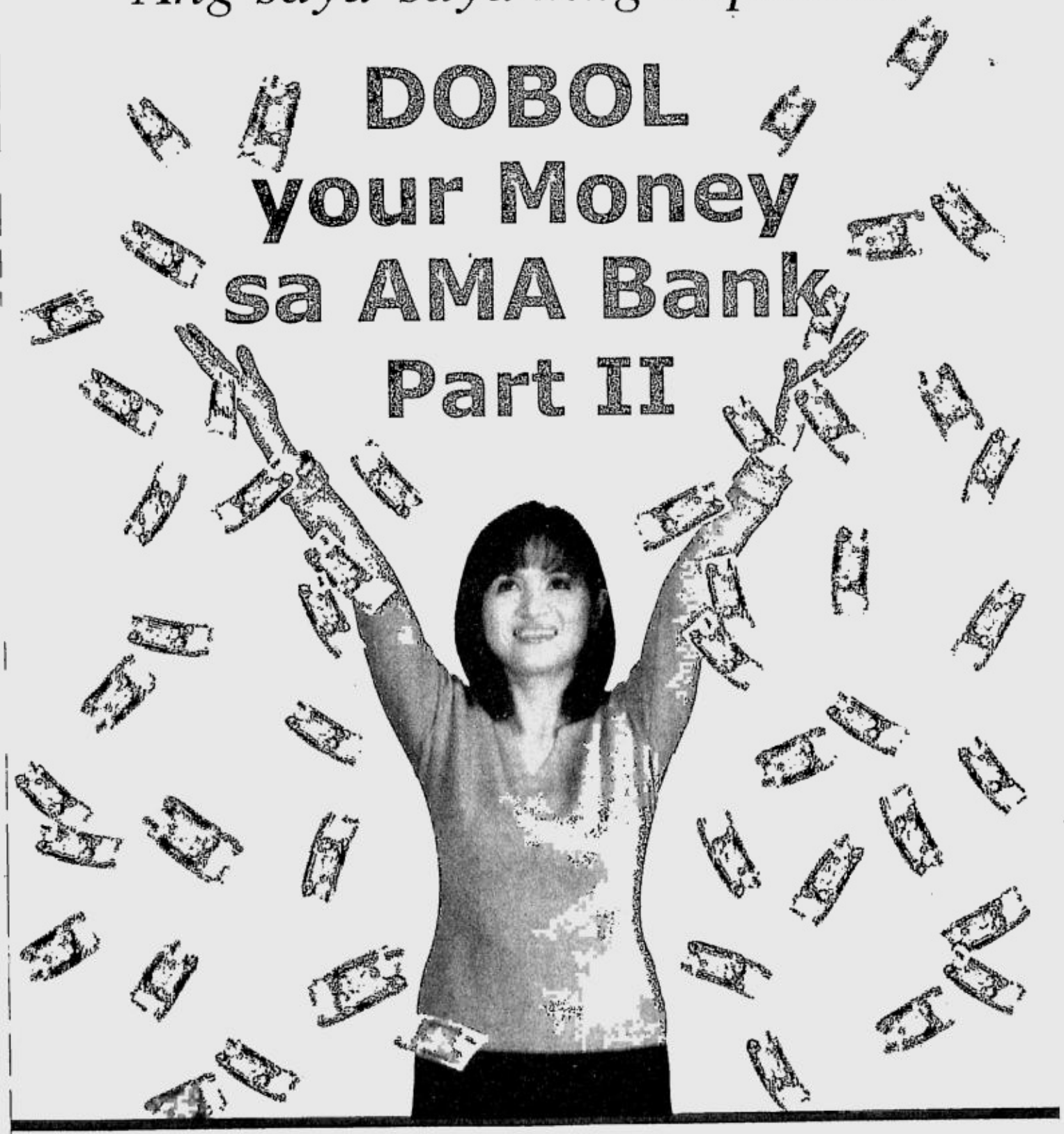

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UNITED NATIONS FORECAST

Asia's economies to beat average growth in '05

BANGKOK, Thailand—Developing economies in the Asia-Pacific region will grow faster than the global average next year, but face challenges from volatile oil prices, an end to WTO textile quotas and slowing growth in major export markets, the United Nations says.

China is expected to have the region's highest gross domestic product growth rate at 8.8 percent, followed by India with 6.8 percent, Kim Hak-su, director of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, told a news conference Monday.

The average growth rate for developing Asian economies is projected to slow from 6.9 percent to 6.2 percent, but the region "will continue to have the highest growth rates in the world," Kim said as he presented a report on the region's economies.

Worldwide, economic growth is expected to average 3.4 percent in 2005, he said.

The UN agency expects volatile oil prices to continue to have a negative impact on regional economies, Kim said, adding that the agency forecasts average benchmark crude futures at US$38 (28.6 euros) a barrel in 2005.

Crude futures rose to US$55 (41.4 euros) a barrel in October—more than twice what they cost 18 months ago—and are currently around US$40 (30.1 euros) a barrel.

Oil prices will fluctuate in 2005 because of the war in Iraq, erratic supplies, and rising demand for energy in growing economies such as India and China, said Raj Kumar, poverty and development chief at the agency.

Kim added that domestic oil subsidies are unsustainable in some countries, citing Indonesia where subsidies in 2004 will likely amount to "nearly a quarter of total government revenues."

An expected economic slowdown in Japan, China and the United States—the main export markets for developing nations in the region—would likely have repercussions across the Asia-Pacific region, Kim said.

China's overheated economic growth should ease in 2005, while the weaker dollar and Tokyo's huge public debt are set to put the brakes on Japan's growth, he said.

The United States has huge current account and fiscal deficits.

An end to textile quotas under World Trade Organization rules on Jan. 1 will also likely slow growth, Kim said.

The quotas gave favorable import tariffs to countries such as Bangladesh, where textiles account for 75 percent of total exports, and Sri Lanka, where they account for close to 50 percent, he said. *AP*

US shoppers defy gloom; retail sales up

WASHINGTON—Consumers, the backbone of the US economy, defied grim holiday forecasts and pushed retail sales higher in November, government figures showed Monday.

Despite a slump in motor vehicle sector, overall retail sales rose a seasonally adjusted 0.1 percent from the previous month, a better than expected start to the fastest sales period of the year.

Wall Street analysts had widely predicted no change.

Stripping out motor vehicle sales, which slumped 1.3 percent, retail sales advanced by a solid 0.5 percent, gaining on a broad front, the Commerce Department report showed.

"The trend shows that it is going to be a very solid holiday season," said Wachovia economist Gina Martin.

The November performance, if anything, was underestimating the underlying strength of the consumer, she said.

Wachovia estimated that holiday sales in November and December, excluding food, motor vehicles and gasoline, would rise more than 7 percent over the same period last year.

Consumer spending is scrutinized by the financial markets because it accounts for two-thirds of US economic activity.

The retail sales report is sure to be welcomed by policymakers on the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) who are widely expected to raise key short-term interest rates at a meeting Tuesday.

Brisk sales may assuage concerns that higher interest rates could stall the economy.

A breakdown of the Commerce Department report showed motor vehicle retailers were the weakest spot.

Elsewhere, however, retail sales advanced a wide front.

In advance of holidays, sales of electronic and appliance goods surged one percent and Internet and mail order retailers also gained one percent.

Food and beverage sales climbed 0.6 percent, general merchandise store sales rose 0.4 percent, and restaurant and bar sales advanced 0.2 percent. *AFP*

AN EMPLOYEE arranges boxes in the window of a shop in a Hong Kong shopping mall, as shops promote Christmas holiday spending. The global economy is set to slow down during 2005, and this deceleration could yet turn into a full-blown slump if one of a number of potential threats take hold, a leading London-based think tank said. AFP

US Fed seen raising key interest rates

WASHINGTON—With a fall in oil prices easing inflation concerns, the Federal Reserve is expected to continue its easy-does-it approach to raising interest rates, boosting a key rate by a moderate quarter-point at its final meeting of the year Tuesday.

Many analysts believe this pattern of gradual quarter-point rate increases will continue well into the new year.

Solid economic growth and an absence of inflation pressures mean Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan and his colleagues can take their time in moving away from exceptionally low interest rates.

"The essential picture the Fed sees is a well-balanced and sustainable economic expansion. It has the leeway to continue its measured steps," said economist David Jones, the author of four books on the Greenspan Fed.

The federal funds rate, the interest that banks charge on overnight loans, is now at 2 percent, up from a 46-year low of one percent, where it stood before the Fed began nudging rates higher on June 30.

Short-term consumer rates have been heading higher at the same gradual pace.

Banks' prime lending rate, the benchmark for millions of consumer loans, is now at 5 percent, up from 46-year low of 4 percent before the Fed began raising rates.

Even with a rate increase Tuesday, the funds rate and the consumer rates tied to it will still be at historically low levels.

Fed officials have said they are trying to gradually raise the funds rate to a "neutral" level where it is neither promoting stronger economic growth nor depressing growth.

Many economists believe that level of the funds rate would be somewhere between 3 percent and 4 percent.

When oil prices were soaring to above $55 per barrel in October, some analysts said the central bank would feel the need to accelerate its rate-tightening moves if it appeared that the big jump in energy prices was threatening to push overall inflation rates higher.

However, oil prices have retreated significantly from those highs, trading at around $41 per barrel currently, a move that has helped ease concerns about inflation.

On the growth side of the ledger, there had been concerns earlier in the fall that a sputtering job market would force the Fed to put its rate hikes on hold for a while.

But October job growth surged by 303,000 and the November figure, while lower, showed a still respectable increase of 112,000 jobs.

Analysts said the Fed will continue monitoring the economy closely and keep nudging rates up slowly as long as job growth continues and inflation remains moderate.

"What the Fed does will depend on what the inflation and employment numbers do from month to month," said David Wyss, chief economist at Standard & Poor's in New York.

All analysts said they expected little change to the Fed's statement explaining its actions. *AP*

Motorola to cut business units

CHICAGO—Motorola Inc., the No. 3 maker of cell phones, on Monday said it will realign its business units to streamline operations and lower costs.

Motorola, whose shares rose 6 percent, said it will cut its remaining five divisions down to four. The company earlier this month completed the spin off of its semiconductor business.

The company's integrated electronic systems unit, which makes batteries, automotive products and computer boards, will be folded into other areas. Other units such as its mainstay cell phone business will be beefed up to give customers more choices, the company said.

It said the restructuring brings no change in reporting relationships and it has no immediate plans to cut jobs.

The company's personal communications business, which had focused exclusively on cellular phones, becomes a personal devices business, developing phones and cell phone-related products such as batteries. Ron Garriques remains in charge of the business.

The company's global telco solutions unit, which sells wireless networks, radio base stations and the IDEN push-to-talk communications systems for Nextel, becomes a more comprehensive networks business, Motorola said.

It will now include pieces of the company's broadband operations, including next-generation products and 802.XX, as well as computer boards. The group is headed by Adrian Nemcek.

Motorola's commercial, government and industrial solutions business (CGIS), which had sold two-way radios and other communications to police and government groups, will fold in the automotive products.

Finally, Motorola's broadband business becomes its connected home business, keeping existing satellite customers such as Comcast Corp., as well as developing security systems and other products for home users. *Reuters*

Japan bankruptcies slip for 23rd month in November

TOKYO—The number of Japanese firms going bankrupt fell for the 23rd straight month in November, helped by corporate revival programs and expanded government assistance, a research firm said on Tuesday.

The number of corporate bankruptcies in November fell 2.6 percent from the same month last year to 1,106 cases, marking the second-longest period of declines since World War II, Teikoku Databank said.

The total debt of bankrupt firms dropped 64.6 percent to 357.15 billion yen ($3.41 billion), slipping below the 400 billion yen mark for the first time in five months to the lowest level this year.

Teikoku added that the stuttering economic recovery had yet to rehabilitate the fortunes of Japanese companies as a whole.

"Improved corporate earnings have helped to reduce bankruptcies, but that is limited to large, export-oriented companies," the research firm said in a statement.

"Smaller domestic companies such as retailers and service providers are still suffering from a lack of demand." While a government survey showed last week that Japanese consumer confidence improved slightly in November, worries linger that the economic recovery is slowing.

A Reuters poll of 17 economists on Monday produced a forecast of 2 percent real growth in the year ending next March, followed by 1.2 percent growth in 2005/06.

A previous poll in October had yielded forecasts for real growth of 3.4 percent in the current year and 1.7 in the following.

Japan's economy grew just 0.1 percent in July-September compared with the preceding quarter, as exports to China and the United States slowed and the yen climbed to a five-year high against the dollar.

A Bank of Japan survey due on Wednesday is expected to show a fall in corporate sentiment from the previous survey in September.

Other analysts said that while the economy is still recovering, albeit at a slower pace, the banking sector remained a concern and more companies could go under, especially outside Japan's big cities.

"(The economy) is on the direction of positive growth, but the non-performing loan rate is still historically high, so that may drive a number of bankruptcies," said Hitoshi Asaoka, economist at the Mitsubishi Research Institute.

Major banks have made inroads into clearing their books of sour debts left over from overzealous lending in the bubble years of the 1980s.

Bad loans at Japan's seven major bank groups fell to an average of 4.4 percent of all lending at the end of September from 5.6 percent in March and a peak of more than 10 percent at the start of the decade.

But the situation is different for many regional banks.

"The problem is basically concentrated in regional areas and not metropolitan areas," said Asaoka.

On a monthly basis, the number of firms that went bankrupt actually rose slightly by 3.9 percent, but the total debt of bankrupt firms dropped 47.5 percent.

The number of bankruptcies fell on a yearly basis in every industry except for the retail, transport and telecom sectors.

In November one listed firm went under: Media Lynks Corp OJ, Teikoku said.

Two bankruptcies resulted from an earthquake in the Niigata region of northern Japan in October that killed 40 people, while those attributed to damage wreaked by typhoons numbered five. *Reuters*

Oil holds gains on winter forecast, lower supply

SINGAPORE—Oil prices extended gains above $41 a barrel on Tuesday on forecasts of colder temperatures in the US Northeast, a supply cut by top Opec producer Saudi Arabia and disruptions to Iraqi crude exports.

US light crude rose 33 cents to $41.34 a barrel, adding to a 30-cent rise overnight after falling earlier on Monday to $40.25, the lowest since end-July and almost 28 percent below the record peak in October.

Forecaster Meteorlogix said on Monday temperatures were set to drop below normal in the next five days in the US Northeast, the world's largest heating oil market, ending a run of mild weather that had helped fuel producers build winter stockpiles.

But two investment banks remained cautious about the impact of the colder weather forecast on demand.

"We never try to call weather, but do note that on a degree-day-basis ... the US is running 9 percent (50 heating degree days) warmer than normal. And as we all know, inventories, be they natural gas, oil or products, are more than adequate, unless Northern Hemisphere weather turns polar," Merrill Lynch said in a report.

Goldman Sachs said it had pushed its cumulative weather-related estimate for loss in demand to 36 million barrels, up 6 million barrels from last week, due to warmer-than-normal weather so far in the three major consuming regions worldwide.

Goldman Sachs also noted that industrial activity in Europe and Northeast Asia continued to weaken, with its leading index showing a rapid slowdown.

A preliminary Reuters survey of eight analysts ahead of Wednesday's release of weekly inventory data forecast an average build of 1.1 million barrels of distillates, including heating oil and diesel fuel, for the week to Dec. 10.

This would be the fourth-straight week of increase as the mild Northeast temperatures thus far dampened demand, which was likely to hover around 4.0 million bpd, slightly below the Dec. 3 level of 4.1 million bpd, the survey showed.

Yet while heating oil stocks have been slowly rising, they remain about 13.5 percent below the year-ago level, prompting concern that supplies may be insufficient if the US winter is particularly cold, analysts cautioned.

Oil prices have been easing on the view that world crude stocks will be sufficient this winter, despite Opec's decision on Friday to rein in one million barrels a day of excess output.

Saudi Arabia is earmarked to cut 500,000 bpd. Refiners in Japan and South Korea, Asia's second and fourth biggest oil consumers, and Taiwan have been informed by Riyadh that supplies would be cut by 8 percent in January.

Saudi sales to global oil companies also were reduced significantly, although traders said their companies requested lower supplies rather than having cuts imposed by Riyadh.

But Kuwait has told key term crude oil lifters in Asia it will supply full contract volumes in January despite the Opec decision, traders said on Tuesday.

"I'm not sure Kuwait is really committed to cut production. I think Saudi Arabia will be the only one to implement cuts among Opec producers," said a trader at a Japanese trading house.

The market was also reminded of the frequent disruptions to global supplies that had partly contributed to this year's price rally. Sabotage on Sunday stopped oil flowing through Iraq's northern export pipeline to the Turkish terminal of Ceyhan. *Reuters*

Buwis, smuggling at trabaho – Pagpasiyahan sa panig ng manggagawa at magsasaka!

Ang tambal na isyu ng fiscal crisis at mga bagong buwis ay hindi maaaring ihiwalay sa mas malawak na isyu ng kawalan ng trabaho sa industriya at lumiliit na kita sa pagsasaka.

Kami, mga pambansang pederasyon ng mga manggagawa at mga organisasyong magsasaka na nakikiisa sa **Fair Trade Alliance (FTA)**, ay naninindigan na:

- ✓ **Bago magpataw ng buwis ang pamahalaan, sugpuin muna ang karumal-dumal na smuggling na kumikitil sa industriya, agrikultura at trabaho.** Sa pag-aaral ng Fair Trade Alliance, mahigit P100 bilyon kada taon ang nawawala sa gobyerno dahil sa smuggling. Kung isasama ang halaga ng mga buhay ng mga manggagawa at magsasakang winasak ng mga smugglers, mahigit pa rito siguro.
- ✓ **Dapat itaas ng pamahalaan ang mga taripa sa mga imported na pumapatay sa mga lokal na produkto.** Bakit mas mababa pa ang mga taripa ng Pilipinas kumpara sa Tsina, Thailand, India at iba pang bansa na nagluluwas sa atin ng mga murang produkto? Ano ba ang prayoridad natin – paglikha ng trabaho sa Pilipinas o trabaho para sa ibang bansa?
- ✓ **Ibasura ang mga buwis na nakakapinsala sa trabaho ng mga ating mga manggagawa at kabuhayan ng ating mga magsasaka na ngayo'y pinapanukala sa loob at labas ng gobyerno.**
- ✓ **Kung kailangang magpataw ng bago o dagdag na buwis, hindi ito dapat makadagdag sa lalong pagbulusok ng lokal na industriya at agrikultura.** Kapag lumalaki ang buwis na ipinapataw, maaaring mamamatay ang mismong pinapatawan nito. Sa huli, pati pamahalaan ay mawawalan ng koleksyon. ***Improve tax collection, but do not erode the taxable base, the nation's agro-industrial base.***

Kaugnay nito, kami ay nababahala na

- ➢ sa usapin ng smuggling, puro ***outright smuggling*** ang tinatalakay ng Bureau of Customs sa Senado, at nakakalimutan ang isyu ng ***technical smuggling*** tulad ng undervaluation (hal., halaga ng Pajero itutumbas lamang sa $450) misdeclaration (hal., karne ideideklarang prutas), atbp.
- ➢ sa cigarette o 'sin taxes', bakit hindi kinikibo ang isyu ng pagtitinda ng sigarilyo, alkohol, tsokolate at iba pang produkto sa mga duty-free shops sa Clark, Subic at iba pang lugar na malayo sa international airports? Sa sigarilyo lamang, halos P7.5 bilyon kada taon ang nawawala sa pamahalaan dahil sa mga duty-free shops na ito. Ang mga sigarilyong ito ay yari sa labas ng bansa at wala halos inaambag na trabaho dito sa atin.
- ➢ hindi pinag-uusapan ang epekto sa tobacco farmers. May proposal na pagsama-samahin ang mga grado ng tabako – premium, high, medium at low, na ang ibubunga ay maglilipatan lamang ang mga cigarette manufacturers sa premium. Paano na ang mga nagtatanim ng native tobacco? Bakit hindi bigyan ng incentives ang mga manufacturers na gumagamit ng locally-grown tobacco at dagdagan ng buwis ang puro imported ang gamit? Sang-ayon sa pag-aaral, sa bawat trabaho sa cigarette factory, may katumbas na 30 tobacco farmers. Isasakripisyo ba natin sa abstraktong pangalan ng tax collection efficiency ang halos 65,000 magsasaka, 10,000 manggagawa at mahigit 300,000 kapamilyang umaasa sa kanila?
- ➢ hindi pinag-uusapan ang job-creation sa industriya. Bakit nga ba ipaparehas ang mga producers na puro imports ang ginagamit sa mga producers na mas gumagamit ng lokal na materyales at labor? Bakit ipaparehas ang operasyon na puro automated sa pabrikang mga tao ang nagpapatakbo?
- ➢ hindi pinag-uusapan ang iba pang buwis – buwis sa pagkunsumo ng mga luxury items, buwis sa pagkunsumo ng mga imported, buwis sa pagkunsumo na di lumilikha ng lokal na trabaho at kabuhayan.

Nananawagan kami sa pamahalaan, sa Senado, sa Kongreso, sa DOF at sa mga mamamayan, bigyan natin ng tamang direksyon ang usapin ng fiscal crisis at new taxes. Ang isyu ay paano palalakasin at pauunlarin ang industriya at agrikultura para lumikha ng sapat na trabaho at kita sa pagsasaka at tunay na solusyon sa tinatawag na fiscal crisis ng bansa.

Ibasura ang mga kontra magsasaka at manggagawang buwis!

Walang tutulong sa mga Pilipino kundi mga Pilipino rin!

Atty. Ernesto Arellano
National President, National Confederation of Labor (NCL)
President, National Federation of Labor (NFL)

Angelito R. Mendoza
Convenor for Labor, Fair Trade Alliance (FTA)

David L. Diwa, Jr.
National Secretary General, National Union of Labor (NLU)

Oca Acerin
National President, Alyansa ng Makabayang Obrero (AMO)

Carlito P. Rallistan
National President, Association of Democratic Labor Organizations (ADLO)

Florentino P. Cruz
National President, Philippine Association of Federated Labor Unions (PAFLU)

Butch Peña
National Vice President for Organization, Association of Genuine Labor Organizations (AGLO)

Jerry Canja
National Secretary General, Katipunan ng mga Samahang Manggagawa (KASAMA)

Alberto Ronquillo
National Chairman, Kapatiran ng Kristong Manggagawa, Inc. (KKMI)

Atty. Bayani Diwa
National Secretary General, Unified Filipino Service Workers (UFSW)

Frank Mero
National President, Automotive Industry Workers Alliance (AIWA)

Manuel P. Quiambao
President, Philippine Ecumenical Action for Community Empowerment (PEACE) Foundation

Dr. Ernesto Ordoñez
Chairperson, Agriwatch

Virgilio Felezarda
Pambansang Ugnayan ng mga Nagsasariling Lokal na Organisasyon sa Kanayunan (UNORKA)

Romulo Tapayan
President, Kalipunan ng mga Maliliit na Magniniyog sa Pilipinas (KAMMPIL)

Marcelo Abaya, Jr.
President, Samahan ng Magsasaka sa Bayan ng Moncada, Tarlac (SMBM)

Fr. Juanito L. Oliva
Board Chair, Cagayan Valley Center for Empowerment and Rural Development (CREDO)

Bobby Resureccion
National President, Aniban ng Manggagawa sa Agrikultura (AMA)

Fred Pullarca
National General Secretary, Nagkakaisang Lakas ng Manggagawa (NLM)

Garments and Textile and Allied Industries Labor Coalition (GARTEX Labor)

Manuel Arias
National President, National Federation of Federated Labor Unions (NAFLU)

Atty. Ben Alar
National President, Filipinong Samahang Manggagawa (FSM)

Pastor Tabiñas
National President, Pambansang Katipunan ng mga Manggagawa (PKM)

United cuts benefits

CHICAGO—United Airlines took a first step toward achieving the additional labor savings it seeks in bankruptcy, imposing wage reductions on its 8,500 non-union employees that include an 11-percent pay cut for CEO Glenn Tilton and other top executives.

The airline, owned by UAL Corp., told employees on a company hot line Monday that the cuts will account for $112 million of the $725 million a year in labor savings it needs.

They do not include an additional 4 percent temporary reduction in salary that will take effect with the permanent cuts on Jan. 1 and remain in place until United emerges from bankruptcy.

The No. 2 US carrier has not specified a target date for its exit from Chapter 11, but with the industry still in financial turmoil that is now not expected until next fall.

"We believe that this is a fair and equitable way to achieve the immediate cost savings necessary to exit bankruptcy," United spokeswoman Jean Medina said.

Tilton's salary will now be $605,625 as of Jan. 1, Medina said. He previously reduced his $845,500 annual pay by 16 percent in August when United accelerated its push for labor cuts.

Pay cuts also will be 11 percent for the seven top executives who report to Tilton, along with 8 percent for officers, 6 percent for management employees and 4 percent for salaried workers.

The airline also said it is devising new benefit plans for the nonunion employees that could affect medical and dental programs, vacation and holiday schedules and sick leave.

United said it will achieve the rest of its savings for salaried and management employees through productivity enhancements totaling at least $30 million annually. It did not specify the savings.

Management remains in difficult negotiations with its unions over the bulk of the labor cuts, hoping it does not have to ask a bankruptcy judge to put them into effect next month in lieu of an agreement. *AP*

Asian stocks track Wall St. jump focus on US Fed moves on rates

SINGAPORE—Asian shares rose on Tuesday after US stocks hit multi-year highs, with exporters cheering an unexpected rise in American retail sales, and the dollar held steady ahead of an anticipated US interest rate rise.

Oil climbed 31 cents to $41.32 a barrel on fears that heating oil supplies in the US Northeast could fall short of demand and after top Opec producer Saudi Arabia cut supplies.

The dollar was mostly steady. Traders were awaiting data on the US current account deficit on Thursday, after worries over large imbalances helped push the US currency to a series of record lows against the euro.

Gold slipped to around $437 an ounce, while Japanese government bonds edged higher.

Financial bookmakers expected Britain's FTSE 100 to open higher, tracking gains on Wall Street.

Most Asian share markets

GREENSPAN

rose, but investors were cautious ahead of the Fed's expected quarter-point rise in interest rates, due around 1915 GMT, and the Bank of Japan's quarterly tankan corporate sentiment and capital spending survey on Wednesday.

Tokyo's Nikkei stock index closed up 1.2 percent at 10,915.58, lifted by exporters. Sony Corp. jumped 1.3 percent, helped by the stronger-than-expected retail sales data in the United States, Japan's biggest export market.

"The rally on Wall Street and sound retail sales data restored confidence over US consumer spending. That's giving a boost here," said Kenichi Azuma, equity strategist at Cosmo Securities.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan had risen 0.8 percent by 0615 GMT, led by technology shares after gains in their US peers.

Hong Kong shares had climbed 0.8 percent by midday, but concerns about a legal challenge to a $3 billion real estate investment trust IPO for the Housing Authority's capped gains.

Taiwan shares rose half a percent, led by a one percent rise in Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. Ltd. Stocks rose 0.6 percent in Australia and South Korea.

Exporters led gains in Asia, with Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd. jumping up 2.6 percent, Toyota Motor rising 2.3 percent and Toshiba Corp. up 1.4 percent.

Shares in resource companies rose on strong commodity prices, with BHP Billiton rising 1.8 percent in Australia.

Canon Inc. climbed 2.3 percent after the company said it would likely see a record profit in 2005, thanks to robust sales of profitable printers and copiers.

The dollar was steady at late New York levels around 104.85 yen, but below Friday's one-month high of 106.20. The euro bought around $1.3290, down slightly from $1.3310. *Reuters*

After 18 months, Oracle clinches PeopleSoft with $10.3-B deal

SAN FRANCISCO—PeopleSoft Inc. on Monday agreed to a sweetened $10.3 billion buyout by rival software maker Oracle Corp., relenting after an 18-month takeover saga marked by personal insults, courtroom battles and the ouster of PeopleSoft's chief executive.

Oracle's $26.50-per-share bid, which creates the world's second largest business software maker, was approved by the board of directors of both companies just three weeks after PeopleSoft had again rejected a deal despite support from a majority of its shareholders.

The deal, which is expected to close by early January, topped Oracle's previous offer of $24 a share, which Oracle had insisted was its best and final bid. The takeover has already received US and European Union antitrust approval.

Oracle believes the acquisition of PeopleSoft will help it better compete with market leader SAP AG in the market for software that helps companies automate business processes such as payroll and inventory-tracking.

The deal underscores the sluggish growth driving consolidation in the software industry, according to Eugene Walton of Walton Holdings, an independent technology stock research firm.

"It tells everyone else in the software business that it truly is a no-growth business," Walton said. "If (Oracle) can get PeopleSoft this way, then anything goes. No software company can protect themselves from not being acquired."

Oracle co-founder and chief executive Larry Ellison launched an offer for PeopleSoft with a bid of $16 a share, or about $5.1 billion, in June 2003.

PeopleSoft shares jumped about 10.3 percent to $26.43 on the Nasdaq to their highest level in 19 months. Oracle shares rose about 9.6 percent to $14.55, an 11-month high.

During Oracle's US antitrust trial over the summer, analysts who evaluated the implications of a merger estimated in court testimony that between 6,000 and 10,000 PeopleSoft employees could be laid off.

The deal was announced on the same day Oracle and PeopleSoft were scheduled to appear in Delaware Chancery Court for a hearing on Oracle's lawsuit to void PeopleSoft's shareholder rights' plan, which had been the last barrier to a hostile takeover.

Triggering the rights' plan, or poison pill, would have made a deal prohibitively expensive for Oracle.

The two rivals had held "friendly" merger talks in June 2002 before discussions broke down over who would run the company and how a merged company would operate.

Some analysts said they believed Oracle overpaid for PeopleSoft. *Reuters*

PEOPLESOFT INC. agreed to a $10.3-billion buyout by rival software maker Oracle Corp. on Monday, finally relenting after an 18-month takeover saga. The merger will create the world's second largest business software maker. AFP

Canon

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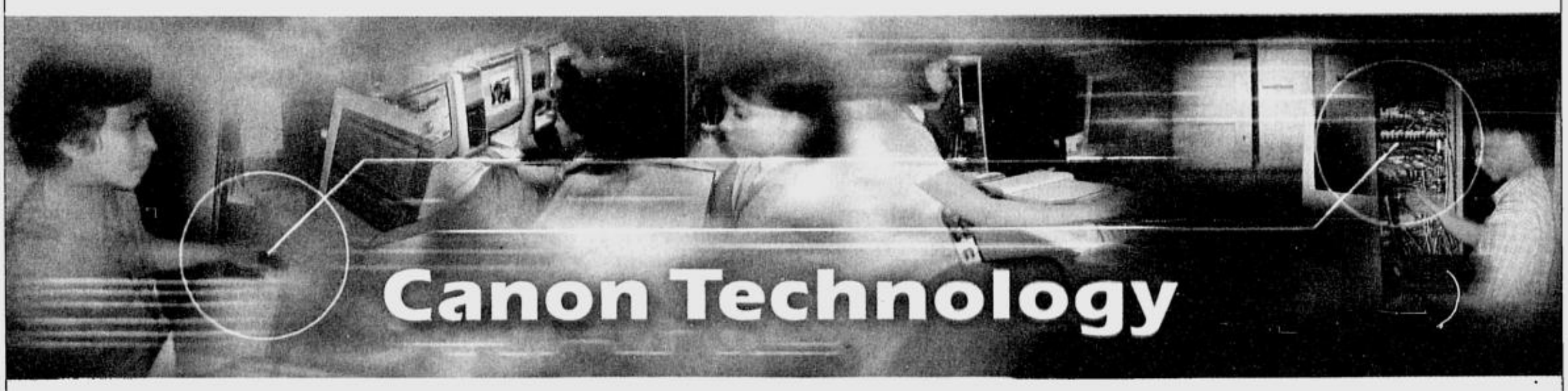

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Maksim performs at The Podium

CROATIAN pianist Paksim will give Filipinos a rare glimpse of his modern classic style as he performs at The Podium's Lounge area on Saturday, Dec. 18 at 8 p.m. An autograph signing session will follow the performance, which is a collaboration of The Podium, Astroplus, and EMI Music Philippines.

MAKSIM

Maksim's musicality fuses classical music with modern flourishes. With a flair for drama, the 29-year-old virtuoso often creates atmosphere with a video screen, laser lights, and fog machines. Maksim appears onstage in avant-garde clothes and performs with orchestral or techno music swirling around the tinkle and thunder of ivory keys.

Then again, Maksim only deconstructs the rules he has learned well. An accomplished prodigy, he gave his first public appearance at the age of 9 and studied later at the Music Academy of Zagreb and Ferene Lizst Conservatoire in Budapest.

To date, he has won numerous awards, including the grand prize in the 1999 Nicolai Rubenstein International Piano Competition and the 2001 Pontoise Piano Competition. His first international debut album, "The Piano Player", shipped double platinum in Hong Kong, platinum in Taiwan, Singapore, and Croatia, and gold in Malaysia, India, and China.

His latest CD under EMI Classics, "Variations Part I and II", includes interpretations of classical and pop themes from Liszt's "Totentanz" and Mussorgky's "Pictures at an Exhibition", to David Essex's "Olympic Dream" to Freddie Mercury's "Bohemian Rhapsody". Recorded in the United Kingdom and Croatia, internationally renowned producers and writers helped bring Maksim's flight of fancies to life.

Dynamic and inventive as a musical personality, Maksim appeals not only to a niche market, but also to mainstream music lovers. Confessing to have a secret, he reveals that, "I've always been experimental because I want to bring my love of classical music to a young international audience. I try something new, something different all the time because that has always been the dream."

And for someone who persevered practicing in the school music basement as grenades exploded overhead in war-torn Croatia not too long ago-for someone who used to put up his own concert posters in small towns-reality has become, like the music, a modern twist of a classic fairy tale.

Pilmap Holiday edition

PILMAP Travel and Leisure recently released its Holiday edition featuring Macau as the cover story. The Holiday issue also features other interesting Christmas destinations including Hong Kong, Baguio, Bukidnon, Iloilo and Boracay. Also of interest is the exclusive fashion pictorial spread with clothing company Shanghai Tang in Tibet and Mongolia. The magazine is now on board 8 international airlines with inbound flights to Manila. The magazine can now also be read on board Philippine Airlines domestic and international flights.

Figaro's 'Les Plats Du Jour'

AT FIGARO, coffee is certainly the main draw, but what to eat it with? With Figaro's special promotional offering, "Les Plats Du Jour", you can enjoy the perfect French compliment to your favorite brew. Reminiscent of simple yet flavorful dishes whipped up by French country restaurants and home kitchens, or of the bistros and cafés of Paris, it features an enticing selection of special weekday meals. There are 5 great-tasting selections elegantly presented to satisfy the most finicky tastebuds, all served with brewed coffee or iced tea. Ongoing until Dec. 15 in most Figaro stores, the weekday options are affordably priced at P169 per meal.

Musicat auditions set

MUSICAT, a Filipino theater company dedicated to the creation and production of original Filipino musicals that always speak of good solid values, love of family and country, and a commitment to the Filipino musical talent, will hold auditions for Ryan Cayabyab and Noel Balmaceda's "Alikabok", and Nonoy and Waya Gallardo's "Saranggola ni Pepe, the musical", on Dec. 16, 2 to 8 p.m. at the 4th floor of the MKP Room of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. The audition is open to male and female actors aged 16 to 30, can sing, dance and act, fluent in Filipino and English, with great personality and stage presence, and has the time to rehearse extensively. For more audition details, call OPM and look for Cel Layag at 723-1765 or 723-1845 and 721-7229.

PBO exam dates

THE PHILIPPINE Board of Orthodontics, recognized by the Professional Regulation Commission's Board of Dentistry, has released its upcoming examination schedules for 2005: Phase I-Application, Interview and dexterity examination (April 27) application deadline, March 30; Phase 2-Written examination (July 27), application deadline, June 29; Phase 3-Presentation of 5 clinical cases (Jan. 26, application deadline, Oct. 27; and Phase 4-Presentation of 10 clinical cases (Jan. 26), application deadline (Oct. 27). PBO has maintained its role of safeguarding the practice of orthodontics in the Philippines with its pursuit of professional excellence. For more information, call the PBO secretariat Dr. Robert I. Eustaquio, 561 WackWack Road UG-7, Mandaluyong City, at 718-4588.

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
Office of the Assistant Vice President
LUZON CENTRAL CLUSTER
Office: Tarlac Hub Branch Tel: (045) 982-6967
Macabulos Drive, Tarlac City Fax: (045) 982-1092

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM (SSS) is inviting bidders for a two (2) year contract of security services to be rendered at the premises/properties/sites of the following branches

BRANCHES	Total Number of Security Guards	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) (For one year)
Tarlac: Tarlac City & Camiling; *Pampanga:* Angeles City & San Fernando; Zambales: Olongapo & Iba. *Nueva Ecija:* Cabanatuan; *Bataan:* Balanga & Manveles; Aurora: Baler; Bulacan: Malolos, Meycauayan, Baliuag, Sta. Maria; *Pangasinan:* Dagupan, Alaminos & Urdaneta *(Total = 17 Branches)*	55	P 11,331,045.60

Source of Fund: M/R Building – Security

The prospective contractor shall have a minimum experience of three (3) years as licensed security agency.

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

Particulars	Date	Venue
Issuance of Eligibility Requirements	December 15-29, 2004	SSS Tarlac Office, Macabulos Drive, Tarlac City
Deadline of submission of eligibility requirements	January 4, 2005 5:00 p.m.	– do –
Issuance of Bid Tender Documents to Eligible Bidders upon payment of non-refundable fee of P10,000.00	January 10, 2005	– do –
Pre-bid Conference	January 12, 2005 2:00 p.m.	– do –
Submission & Opening of Bids shall be announced and confirmed through Bid Bulletin		

For inquiry, please call telephone number/s (045) 9828739/(045) 9826967 (SSS Tarlac)

This bidding shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Act."

The Social Security System reserves the rights to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The Social Security System neither assumes any obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidder(s) for expenses or losses they incur in connection to this bidding nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) ARSENIO P. DASIG
OIC-Luzon Central &
Chairman-BAC Cluster

(PDI - December 15, 2004)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Central Regional Office Luzon Office
Cabanatuan City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID FOR INTEGRATED CARGO HANDLING SERVICES FOR NFA REGION III

The National Food Authority, NFA Central Luzon Regional Office, Cabanatuan City invites interested Integrated Cargo Handling Services Contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the provision of Integrated Cargo Handling Services in the discharging of 102,250 MT of NFA imported grains and USPL 480 of 44,000 MT, more or less from foreign vessels at Subic Ports with an approved budget for the Contract (ABC) of P38,699,837.46.

The scope of works to be bid for said integrated services include Arrastre, Stevedoring, Wharfage, Hustling, Truckscaling, Opening/Closing of Hatches, Import Entry documentation, and other Port Services

The application for eligibility and pertinent bidding documents can be secured from NFA-CLRO, Cabanatuan City, Regional Bids and Awards Committee (RBAC)-Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable application fee of P2,000.00 and submission of a certified photocopy each of the following documents:

1) DTI business name registration, CDA Registration and/or SEC registration certificate, whichever may be appropriate;
2) Mayor's Permit (CY 2004) and Official Receipt;
3) Current registration certificate as cargo handler with SBMA;
4) Current Permit To Operate (PTO) issued by SBMA;
5) Certificate of good standing with SBMA;
6) Certification of at least three (3) years experience in grains (in bags) cargo handling/unloading (pierside) for the past three (3) years issued by PPA or SBMA (Original copy to be submitted)

The bidding of Integrated Services shall be conducted at NFA-CLRO, Conference Room, Cabanatuan City on the following schedule:

PARTICULARS	DATE	TIME
1 Issuance of Bid Application and Bid Documents	December 8-20, 2004	8:00 AM-5:00 PM
2. Pre-Bidding Conference	December 22, 2004	2:00 PM
3. Submission and Opening of Bids	January 14, 2005	10:00 AM

The bidding shall be governed by RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. For further inquiries, please contact the RBAC Chairman or Secretariat at NFA-CLRO, Cabanatuan City with Telephone Nos. (044)-463-1167, (044)-463-1168 and (044)-463-1233.

THE NFA RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS THEREOF, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITIES OR DEFECTS FOUND THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS OR TO AWARD TO ANY CONTRACTOR WHOSE BID IS CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE NFA OR TO THE GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) RUBEN J. RESIDE
RBAC Chairman
Asst. Regional Director

(PDI-Dec 8 & 15 2004)

PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE
INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

The assets are being offered on an "as-is, where-is" basis, at the Indicative Prices presented below. Sealed offers shall be received at 3:00 p.m. on the following schedules at PMO Conference Room, 6th Floor, Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Asset Name/ Location	Indicative Price (In Philippine Currency)	Date of Submission of Offers
Sanifoods Processing Corp. Land (19,974 sq.m.), buildings and other land improvements located at Brgy. Concepcion, Rosario, La Union	P9,933,900	January 17, 2005
Pioneer Glass Manufacturing Corp. Land (10.20 hectares) at No. 1275 ME General Trias Drive, Barangay Tejeros Convention, Rosario, Cavite	P154,449,000	January 18, 2005

The above assets are being offered at Indicative Prices payable within a maximum term of two (2) years.

Interested parties may secure the sale documents for non-refundable fees of P500 for Sanifoods and P1,000 for Pioneer Glass.

For more information, please contact the PMO Marketing Office at telephone nos. 817-6331; 817-8762; 818-4733; 892-2145 fax no. 818-0906.

(PDI - Dec. 15, 16 & 17, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Labor and Employment
OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION
OWWA Center Bldg., F.B. Harrison St., cor. 7th St., Pasay City
Tel Nos. 891-7601 to 24

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The OVERSEAS WORKERS WELFARE ADMINISTRATION through its Bids and Awards Committee invites all interested prospective bidders/suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the **provision of Janitorial and Security Services for FY 2005** in accordance with the following terms and conditions

PROJECT	BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT	PRE-BID CONFERENCE	DEADLINE OF BIDS SUBMISSION
Security Services	Php 7,038,480.00	Dec. 20, 2004 8:30am	Dec. 28, 2004 8:30am
Janitorial Services	Php 7,801,983.72	Dec. 20, 2004 1:30pm	Dec. 28, 2004 1:30pm

2. Bid documents will be available for issuance beginning December 14, 2004 (Monday to Friday) from 8:00am to 4:00pm at 3rd Floor, OWWA Center Bldg., F.B. Harrison cor 7th St., Pasay City, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,500.00.

3. Interested prospective bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Secretariat at these numbers : 833-0113 or 833-1010 (Telefax)

4. The public bidding process shall be governed by Republic Act No. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

5. OWWA reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereof, to waive any informality therein and/or minor defect in the bids received and to award to the bidder whose proposal is the most advantageous to the government.

(sgd) ALBERT Q. VALENCIANO
BAC Chairperson

09 December 2004

(PDI--Dec. 15, 2004)

National Power Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

NPC-PSD-2005-01

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-PSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements:

SCHEDULE	ITEM/DESCRIPTION	PR NUMBER	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 18, 2005; 9:00 AM			
1A1	PORTABLE STACK GAS EMISSION MONITOR FOR MEASURING SO2, NO, NO2, CO, CO2 AND O2	0EMD-04-094 (ZC)	P 1,800,000.00
1A2	J.O.-SUPPLY OF LABOR, SERVICES, SUPERVISION, EXPERTISE & PROVISION OF TOOLS/EQUIPT FOR THE HAULING, SITE CLEAN-UP & DISPOSAL OF OILY WATER WASTE & SLUDGE CONTAINED IN APPROX 67,557 LTRS OF FUEL OIL SLUDGE AT BATAAN TPP	0BTP-04-007 (NY)	P 1,013,355.00
1A3	J.O.-SUPPLY, DELIVERY, COMMISSIONING & TESTING OF CEM'S FOR DIESEL POWER PLANT W/ 2 X 50 MTR STACK CASINGS FOR DINGLE POWER PLANT	0VMP-04-508 (NY)	P 10,000,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 18, 2005; 2:00 PM			
1B1	J.O.-SUPPLY OF LABOR, MATLS, TOOLS, EQUIPT & TECHNICAL SUPERVISION FOR THE RECONDITION OF TWO (2) UNITS ROTOR SHAFT FOR VTR 401/IV-GB6 (PB2)	PB2-04-188 (NY)	P 1,500,000.00
1B2	SPARE PARTS FOR NIIGATA-NAPIER TURBO CHARGER, TYPE NA 455 (SE TYPE)	PB3-04-090 (NY)	P 3,234,109.61
1B3	J.O.-SUPPLY OF LABOR, TOOLS, PARTS, MATLS & EQUIPT IN THE RETROFITTING/CONVERSION OF THE EXISTING OIL CIRCUIT BREAKER, BBC, CEM GARDY, TO VACUUM CIRCUIT BREAKER, DRAW-OUT TYPE	BOP-04-305 (NY)	P 2,112,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 19, 2005, 9:00 AM			
1C1	J.O.-SUPPLY, DELIVERY & INSTALLATION OF COMPLETE SET OF RETRACTABLE PACKING RINGS FOR GEC ALSTOM TURBINE INCLUDING FREIGHT, HANDLING & PROF. SUPERVISION	2BCF-04-782 (NY)	P 15,780,000.00
1C2	J.O.-SUPPLY OF LABOR, ENG'G WORKS, MATLS., TOOLS, EQUIPT, SPARE PARTS AND CONSUMABLES FOR THE INSTALLATION & COMMISSIONING OF VARIOUS HYDRAULICALLY CONTROLLED DELUGE VALVES, MATERIAL – FC/BC	2BCF-04-765 (NY)	P 3,000,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 19, 2005, 2:00 PM			
1D1	MINIMUM FLOW (RECIRCULATION) VALVE	2BCF-04-814 (JP)	P 8,200,000.00
1D2	BOILER TUBES FOR UNIT #2 REHEATER PENDANT & WATERWALLS (PB2)	2BCF-04-600 (NY)	P 7,616,016.00
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 20, 2005, 9:00 AM			
1E1	J.O.-SUPPLY OF TURBINE, VALVE & GENERATOR SERVICE ENGINEER/SPECIALIST TO SUPERVISE, CONDUCT & PROVIDE TECH'L ASSISTANCE IN THE GEN. INSPECTION OF TURBINE, VALVE & GENERATOR OF UNIT II, TO INCLUDE LOCAL MANPOWER COMPLEMENT, TOOLS, CONSUMABLES & RENTAL OF SPECIALIZED EQUIPT DURING THE 60-DAYS ANNUAL PLANT OVERHAULING	2BCF-04-789 (NY)	P 20,000,000.00
1E2	J.O.-SUPPLY, DELIVERY & INSTALLATION OF COMPLETE SET OF RETRACTABLE PACKING RINGS FOR GEC ALSTOM TURBINE, TO INCLUDE FREIGHT, HANDLING & PROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION	2BCF-04-789 (NY)	P 18,500,000.00
1E3	AUTOMATIC SELF-CLEANING WATER FILTRATION SYSTEM	2BCF-04-716 (NY)	P 2,350,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 20, 2005, 2:00 PM			
1F1	J.O.-SUPPLY OF EQUIPT/DEVICES, MATLS/SUPPLIES & LABOR IN THE INSTALLATION OF LOCAL AREA NETWORK (LAN) FOR AMBUKLAO HEP (PB2)	UAH-04-062 (JP)	P 1,296,533.00
1F2	PUMP SUBMERSIBLE FOR WATER CONTAINING ABRASIVE PARTICLES, SLUDGE & SOLIDS	UAH-04-011 (LS)	P 1,600,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 25, 2005, 9:00 AM			
1G1	VACUUM CIRCUIT BREAKER & BEARING	3MGM-04-321 (RP)	P 1,050,000.00
1G2	J.O.-SUPPLY OF LABOR, MATLS, TOOLS & EQUIPT INCLUDING SUPERVISION FOR THE FABRICATION/ INSTALLATION OF BREAKER HOUSING CONTROL, MARSHALLING & VARIOUS CONTROL BOXES AT MAK-BAN GPP PLANTS A, B & C	3MGM-04-355 (ZC)	P 2,600,000.00
1G3	AIR CIRCUIT BREAKER, BRAND: MELCO OR EQUIV	3MGM-04-356 (ZC)	P 1,700,000.00
1G4	THERMAL METER RELAY, OIL LEVEL INDICATOR & HYDRAULIC PUMP UNIT, BRAND: MELCO OR EQUIV	3MGM-04-300 (ZC)	P 1,550,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 25, 2005, 2:00 PM			
1H1	PUMP & MOTOR SET, MODEL: MS410, BRAND: EBARA OR EQUIV (PB2)	3TPM-04-035 (RP)	P 1,240,820.00
1H2	LIGHTING OR SURGE ARRESTER	3TGP-04-043 (ZC)	P 2,550,000.00
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 26, 2005, 2:00 PM			
1I1	SPARE PARTS FOR PGPP-11 STEAM TURBINE (PB2)	5PGP2-04-033 (JP)	P 35,000,000.00

NOTE: A Pre-Bidding Conference will be held at the Bidding Room for the following bidding schedules on

1A1-1A3	January 4, 2005, 9:00 AM	1F2	January 6, 2005, 2:00 PM
1B1-1B3	January 4, 2005, 2:00 PM	1G1-1G4	January 11, 2005, 9:00 PM
1C1-1C2	January 5, 2005, 9:00 AM	1H2	January 11, 2005, 2:00 PM
1D1-1D2	January 5, 2005, 2:00 PM	1I1	January 12, 2005, 2:00 PM
1E1-1E3	January 6, 2005, 9:00 AM		

- Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Services Division, Materials Management Dept. of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non-refundable fee of PHP500.00 per schedule starting on December 27, 2004. Issuance of eligibility and bid documents mornings only, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. up to the specified time as stated in the bid schedules above. No bid documents will be issued three (3) calendar days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room, PSD, MMD, NPC, Diliman, Quezon City on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders. Certificate of Registration issued by other NPC Offices will be honored provided that the Certification is still valid. Prospective Bidders shall signify conformance to bidding terms and conditions as required and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution in accordance with the IRR of "Republic Act 9184".

The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit-One Percent (1%), Surety Bond - Two and a half percent (2.5%), pursuant and callable on demand with 120 days validity period from the date of opening of bids issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of his bids, and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee
PSD-NPC

(PDI Dec 15, 2004)

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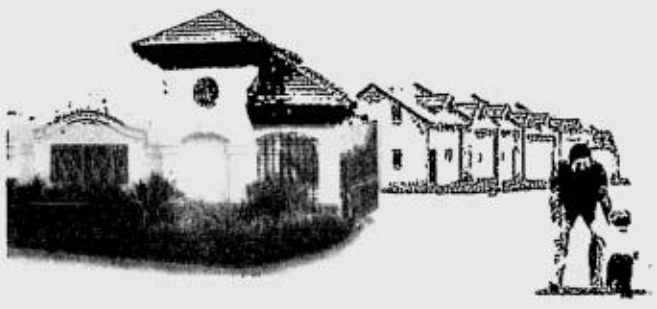

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PASAY

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QUEZON CITY

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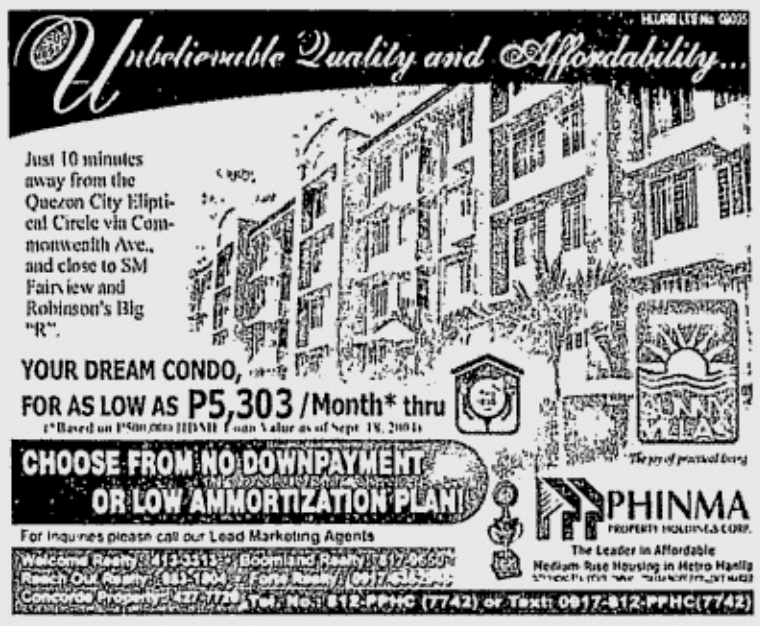

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ANNOUNCEMENT

To the registered owner of a 1994 4DR maroon Kia Pride plate #TJN 359 left at 170 Banawe St. QC with obligations. You are advised to claim car during ofc hours pls present proof of ownership settle obligations in 30days or we will dispose car to cover obligations by management Goldrich (PDI-Dec.15, 22 & 29, 2004)

AUCTION SALE

NATION Pawnshop, Inc.
Pob Meyc Bulacan will auction unredeemed pledges of June '04 on Dec. 23, '04, 10am. - *Lanuza & Sons(PDI Dec. 15 2004)*

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the late Arsenio Benigno has left a cash deposit at LBP Baclaran under acct no. 0271-0868-73 and has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per doc.#338; page#69; series of 2004 before notary public Atty. Jesus B. Bongon of Pasay City (PDI-Dec. 15, 2004)

PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ALBERTO P. VALDESCONA has been extrajudicially settled by his heirs as per Doc. No. 162; Page No. 34; Book No. 1; Series of 2004 before notary public Atty. Gregorio Salazar of Quezon City
PDI-Dec. 1, 8 & 15, 2004

PERSONAL

PRAYER
TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
Holy Spirit thou who make me see everything and show me the way to reach my ideal. You who give me the divine gift to forgive and forget the wrong that is done to me and who are in all instances of my life with me. I, in this short dialogue, want to thank You for everything and confirm once more that I never want to be separated from You, no matter how great the material desires may be. I want to be with You and my loved ones in Your Perpetual Glory. Amen. EJT

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DBP

Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on December 21, 2004, 2:00 p.m., Suite 5, Executive Lounge, 12th floor, DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City for the property described below:

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM BID
BULACAN			
AM-PY-286	Along Cagayan Valley Road, Brgy. Tambubong, San Rafael	6 contiguous lots (TCT Nos. T-167376 to T-167381) total area of 45,997 m²	P 36,000,000.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:

1. To inspect the property to determine its actual condition before the bidding;
2. To submit in DBP's official bid form available at AMD-Acquired Assets, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office, Makati City; and
3. To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers:
892-1566 / 893-7172 or 818-9511 local 2218 / 2252

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI-December 15 & 16, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Intramuros, Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) invites all interested bidders to participate in the bidding for the **"REPLACEMENT OF TWO (2) PASSENGER ELEVATOR CARS"** at the Muralla wing of the DOLE Building with an approved budget for the contract of P5 Million Pesos.

Interested bidders must register and submit registration requirements to the Property Division, Administrative Service, 2nd Floor, DOLE Building, Muralla Street, Intramuros, Manila starting December 15, 2004. The checklist of requirements for registration shall be secured from the same office. Deadline for registration is on January 3, 2005.

Only bidders duly registered with the DOLE may be allowed to participate in the competitive bidding activities, to wit:

ACTIVITY	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Pre-Bid Conference	January 4, 2005	1:30 p.m.	Conference Room, 2nd Floor, DOLE Executive Building, San Jose Street, Intramuros, Manila
Submission of Eligibility Requirements	January 17, 2005	Between 1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.	-same-
Submission of Bids	January 26, 2005	Between 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.	-same-

Eligibility requirements shall be distributed during the Pre-Bid Conference or they can be secured on January 4, 2005 at the Property Division, Administrative Service, 2nd Floor DOLE Bldg., Intramuros, Manila.

Eligible Bidders are also enjoined to inspect the DOLE premises prior to the conduct of the Pre-bid Conference in coordination with the General Services Division, Administrative Service.

Eligibility documents shall be submitted to the DOLE Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) in a sealed envelope marked with the title of the item/project to be bidded and the name of the bidder in capital letters addressed to the undersigned on the date and time specified. Registered bidders are invited to witness the eligibility check on the said date at exactly 2:00 p.m. at the same venue.

Interested Bidders are requested to present their proposals, personally or through their authorized representatives, on the date of the bidding. The DOLE reserves the right to reject any or all bids, without offering any reason, waive any informality therein and make an award to the bidder whose bid is most advantageous to the Department. The DOLE assumes no obligation for whatever losses that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

For further inquiries/information, please get in touch with Ms. Lily Pearl L. Guerrero and Ms. Liberty C. Angeles, members of the BAC Secretariat at telephone numbers 527-3480 and 527-3583.

(Sgd.) **Atty. BENEDICTO ERNESTO R. BITONIO JR.**
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee and
Assistant Secretary for Policy and Program Support

(PDI-Dec. 15 & 22, 2004)

National Power Corporation
INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
NPC-PSD-2005-02

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)-PSD of NPC invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for plant requirement:

SCHEDULE	ITEM/DESCRIPTION	PR NUMBER	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT
DATE OF BIDDING: JANUARY 19, 2005; 9:00 am			
2A1	PRIMARY SUPERHEATER, REHEATER & ECONOMIZER TUBES	2BCF-04-781(NY)	P68,559,099.40

NOTE: A Pre-Bidding Conference will be held at the bidding Room on January 5, 2005 at 9:00 AM.

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Services Division, Materials Management Dept. of NPC, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of non refundable fee of PHP 5,000.00 starting on December 27, 2004. Issuance of eligibility and bid documents mornings only, 8:30 to 11:30 AM up to the specified time as stated in the bid schedules above. No bid documents will be issued three (3) calendar days before the date of bidding.

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The Bidder shall furnish as part of his/her bid, a bid security in the amount equivalent to a percentage of the approved budget for the contract to be bid in the form of Cash, Manager's/Cashier's Check, Irrevocable Letter of Credit- One Percent (1%), surety Bond- Two and a half percent (2.5%), penal and callable on demand with 120 days validity period from the date of opening of bids issued by a Surety or Insurance Company accredited by the Office of the Insurance Commission.

NPC reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract, waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Corporation, without thereby incurring any of the following: a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and b) obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee
PSD-NPC

(PDI--Dec. 15, 2004)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

MR. EMMANUEL B. BATARA, whose picture is shown above, is no longer connected with Gold Carousel Investments Ltd. and Positive Goal Entertainment Philippines, Inc. Any transaction entered into by Mr. Batara in the name of the said organizations starting October 31, 2004 is considered null and void.

(PDI--Dec. 15, 2004)

NOTICE OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Notice is hereby given that at 10.00 AM on 1st March 2005 a hearing will be held before Mr. Justice Lugar-Mawson in the Hong Kong Court of First Instance in respect of absconder proceedings leading to a confiscation order under the provisions of Section 8 of the Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance, Cap 455 of the Laws of Hong Kong, in respect of the following persons and companies who are named as Respondents.

Amador PASTRANA Philippines passport ZZ017001 Date of birth 4th May 1972.	Respondent 1
Alpha Company Ltd Company No 15011	Respondent 2
Jindell Investment Ltd Company No 367520	Respondent 3
Jupiter Advisory Ltd Company No 407452	Respondent 4
First Pacific Company Ltd Company No 7009	Respondent 5
Systems International Ltd Company No105043B	Respondent 6
Calimax Enterprises Ltd Company No 407451	Respondent 7
Cyplus Company Ltd Company No 114160B	Respondent 8
Jopio Company Ltd Company No 16592	Respondent 9
Nobuko Investments Ltd Company No 371740	Respondent 10
Prudence International Ltd Company No 16156	Respondent 11
Wains International Company Ltd Company No 391025	Respondent 12
Moneycare International Ltd Company No 407450	Respondent 13
Chamomile International Ltd Company No 741159	Respondent 14
Highstone Investments Ltd Company No 112158B	Respondent 15
Sabre International Ltd Company No 6470	Respondent 16
Vantage International Management Group Inc. Company No 8403	Respondent 17
Union Trading Ltd Company No 15014	Respondent 18
Novelle Investment Partners Ltd (Bahamas) Company No 81563B	Respondent 19
United Resources Asset Management Inc SEC Reg No A200005310	Respondent 20
Allied European Holdings Ltd Company No 8313	Respondent 21

Any person or company who is a Respondent can obtain a copy of documents and affirmations in relation to the hearing from either Ma. Elmira A. Alconaba, Assistant Director, Compliance and Enforcement Department, Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, or Detective Senior Inspector David COPE, Financial Investigations Division, Hong Kong Police, 21st Floor, Arsenal House West Wing, Police Headquarters, Arsenal Street, Wan Chai, Hong Kong. HCMP 4221 of 2002 refers.

(PDI - Dec. 15, 16 & 17, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
MARIANO MARCOS STATE UNIVERSITY
Batac 2906 Ilocos Norte

ANNOUNCEMENT

The President of Mariano Marcos State University was appointed Commissioner of the Commission on Higher Education effective 28 October 2004. The position was, therefore, declared vacant effective on the same day.

Accordingly, a Search Committee for the Presidency has been organized pursuant to the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 8292.

Applicants must possess the minimum qualifications and must submit the required documents as follows:

Minimum Qualifications of Applicants

1. Filipino citizen
2. Holder of an earned doctoral degree
3. Preferably not more than sixty (60) years old at time of application
4. At least five (5) years of managerial experience
5. Recognized leadership in his/her profession in the academe or industry
6. Morally upright

Documents to be Submitted

1. Detailed Curriculum Vitaé and certified supporting documents
2. Proposed Vision, Mission and Trusts for the University
3. Clearances from NBI, Ombudsman, Sandigan Bayan, Civil Service Commission and previous employer
4. Full disclosure of all administrative, criminal and/or civil cases filed in any court in the Philippines
5. Results of Neuro-Psychiatric Examination to be accomplished by any government physician of an accredited health institution
6. Health Certificate from a government physician

All applications must be submitted in seven (7) copies to the Search Committee through the Secretariat on or before January 15, 2005.

Dr. Alegria T. Visaya
Acting Secretary, Board of Regents/SCP
Mariano Marcos State University
Batac 2906 Ilocos Norte
Tel. No. 077-792-2560
Fax No. 077-792-3191
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(PDI--Dec. 15, 19 & 24, 2004)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
(Head Office)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) invites interested general building contractors currently with Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) License to apply for eligibility and if later found eligible, to bid for the project described below

Project Title	: Proposed Rehabilitation & Upgrading of the Assembly Hall, 3/F, Cafetorium Bldg.
Scope of Work	: Furnishing of all materials, labor, tools, equipment, technical supervision and other services and performing all operations necessary for the completion of the proposed rehabilitation and upgrading of the assembly hall all in accordance with the approved plans & specification and subject to the terms and conditions of the contract.
Project Location	: A. Mabini cor P. Ocampo St., Manila
Approved Budget	: Twenty Eight Million Seven Hundred Ninety Eight Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Seven Pesos (P28, 798,457.00)
Source of Funding	: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Contract Duration	: Sixty calendar days (60 cd)
Minimum Requirement (Criteria)	
PCAB License	: Registration Particulars of at least "Medium B" (Building and Industrial Plant)
Contractor's Construction Experience	: Should have completed within the last five (5) years (1999 to present) at least two (2) projects involving interior works and construction of commercial/corporate projects requiring high-end finishes and excellent workmanship such as 5-Star Hotels, auditoriums, and theaters one of which costs not less than Twenty Five Million Pesos.
Certification of Satisfactory Performance	: Should be able to submit notarized affidavits of Satisfactory Performance for at least two completed projects one of which costs not less than Twenty Five Million Pesos
Net Financial Contracting Capacity computed as 10 x (Current Asset less Current Liabilities) minus (Value of all on-going contracts including awarded yet to be started) or Credit Line or Cash Deposit Certificate	: At least Twenty Nine Million Pesos (P29,000,000.00) : At least Two Million Nine Hundred Thousand Pesos (P2,900,000.00)
Eligibility Statement Forms	
Cost of Forms	: Two Hundred Pesos per set (P200.00/set)
Date of Issuance	: December 15 to 27, 2004
Deadline of Submission	: January 5, 2005
Notice of Eligibility/Ineligibility	
Date of Issuance	: January 14, 2005
Bid/Tender Documents Issuance	: Shall be issued only to eligible contractors upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Ten Thousand Pesos (P10,000.00)
Date of Issuance	: January 17 to 18, 2005
Pre-bid Conference	
Date and Time	: January 21, 2005 9:00 AM
Venue	: MR2A 2nd Floor, BSP Main Complex, A. Mabini cor P. Ocampo Sts
Submission and Opening of Bids	
Deadline of Submission	: February 16, 2005 10:00 AM

For inquiries, please call BAC Secretariat - telephone no. 521-7011 local 3143

The venue for the issuance and submission of accomplished eligibility statements and bid documents is at the BAC Secretariat, Room 204 2nd Floor - Five Storey Building BSP Complex, A. Mabini cor P. Ocampo Sts., Manila 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 nn. & 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Schedule for issuance of notice of eligibility/ineligibility up to deadline of submission of bids may be subject to change.

The provisions of Republic Act No. 9184B its Implementing Rules and Regulations relative to the bidding and award of contract including its implementation shall apply

BSP reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any defect or formality therein, or accept such bid or award any part thereof to any contractors whose bid is/are evaluation to be most advantageous to BSP. Furthermore, BSP is not obligated to compensate/indemnify the contractor for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award of contract will be made.

(Sgd.) MA. DOLORES B. YUVIENCO
Chairperson

(PDI - Dec. 15 & 26, 2004)

OBITUARIES

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❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

• DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS
• DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS

The 78 summers of her life were lived with immense faith and strength. Finally, Eve is coming home...

Nieves Pascasio Mendoza

surrendered to God's sweet embrace on the 13th of December 2004

She shall be deeply missed by her husband **Jake**; her children **Nanette & Stephen, Anthony, Joey**; her grandchild **Stephanie**; her loving sister **Siony**, her nephews, nieces, grandchildren: **Chito & Flora, Jungie, Lissa, Minnie, Mikko & Enzo**. Her relatives request for your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Arlington Memorial Chapels.

Cremation will take place on Saturday, December 18, 2004 at 11:00 a.m. Interment follows at San Felipe Neri Parish, Mandaluyong City at 3:00 p.m.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2004

OBITUARIES

RATE
P245 per column centimeter
(All prices exclusive of E-VAT)*

DEADLINE
for reservations / cancellations / corrections,
Monday to Sunday
12:00 noon
Day before publication

"Go to sleep in peace. God is awake."
– Victor Hugo

WILLIAM T. CHUA, Esq.

Born October 6, 1955,
left the uncertainties of this world
and joined the certainty of Christ's salvation
at the age of 49 on December 13, 2004
after receiving the last rites.

He is survived by his loving wife Betty,
his dear children Brian Kim (Wachu),
Derek Ken (Siopao), and Kristel Kara (Kassie).

His body lies in state at the Capilla del Señor,
Santuario de San Antonio Memorial Chapel, Forbes Park,
Makati. The funeral mass will be held on Saturday,
December 18, 2004, at eight o'clock in the morning.

Cremation will immediately follow at the
Heritage, Park, Fort Bonifacio.

"May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand."

The Law Firm of ARROYO CHUA CAEDO and CORONEL
(formerly Azcuna Yorac Sarmiento Arroyo and Chua)

announces the death of its Managing Partner

WILLIAM T. CHUA

who died on the 13th of December 2004
at the age of 49.

He is survived by his wife, Betty, and children,
Brian, Derek and Kassie, with whom we deeply condole.

His body lies in state at the Capilla del Señor,
Santuario de San Antonio Memorial Chapel, Forbes Park,
Makati. The funeral mass will be held on Saturday,
December 18, 2004, at eight o'clock in the morning.

Cremation will immediately follow
at Heritage Park, Fort Bonifacio.

I am the Resurrection & the Life,
He who believes in Me will Live,
even though He dies, and whoever
believes in Me will never die."
John 11:25-26

Elsie Canoy Escobar

March 26, 1925 – December 10, 2004

Even as we mourn her passing, we celebrate her life and legacy as she is now with her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We are very grateful to God for her earthly life with us.

Her loving husband **Yoyong**; children & sons in law **Mitzi** & **Bill Buot, Eileen** & **Hector San Juan, Laureen** & **Helene**. Grandchildren: **Chris, Debbie** & **Joy Buot, Jasi, Julian, Jerome** and **Justin San Juan**. Brothers & sisters-in-law **Henry** & **Inday, Nestor** & **Lita, Reuben** & **Lon**, Sister and brother-in-law **Yoling** & **Jorge Limjoco**. Nephews, nieces and cousins.

Her body lies in state at Greenhills Memorial Chapel, Bulua Cagayan de Oro. Interment on Saturday, December 18, 2004., 2:30 p.m.

"Whenever I am afraid,
I will trust in you."
Psalm 56:8

ENGR. NORMAN VASQUEZ GARENA

Peacefully joined his Creator on December 12, 2004 at the age of 42.

His loving wife **Annie**; parents **Juanito** and **Basilisa**; parents-in-law **Mama Remy** and **Tito Ben**; brothers and sisters **Veronica** and **Dante**, **Heinrich** and **Annie**, **Rachel** and **Albert** and **Antoneitte** and **Rommel**, aunts and uncles, cousins, nephews and nieces, relatives and friends request the faithful to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels in Sucat, Parañaque. A mass in Holy Trinity at 8:00 a.m. will precede the interment in Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque on Thursday, December 16, 2004.

"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."
John 14:6

Magilende "Inding" B. Ramirez

of Balaoan, La Union

Peacefully joined our Lord on December 14, 2004 at the age of 91.

Her remains lie in state at Baltazar Chapel, La Funeraria Paz -- Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park).

Her family requests the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

We lovingly remember

On his

THIRD DEATH ANNIVERSARY

MENELIO B. SAMSON

July 22, 1935 December 15, 2001

Centro Escolar University
College of Optometry 1959

His loving wife Lydia; child Meldy and son in-law Jack, & grandchildren Biggs, Alodia, Lynelle request friends and relatives to join them in prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

Holy Masses will be offered for his intention.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring... **INQUIRER OBITUARIES**

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:
❶ Copy of Death Certificate; ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN

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Marketing experts show how to find good luck at work and in life

By Regina Galang Reyes

BUSINESS book authors have of late been using fables or stories to spice up the content and perk up the sales of their books like the bestsellers "Who Moved My Cheese?" and "Fish." This may be a knee-jerk reaction to the fact that readers of business books may already have reached their point of satiety with an abundance of books that make for "heavy" reading. However, like a rich chocolate cake after a heavy meal, a reader can also get too much of their just desserts with one fable after another offering lessons on leadership and organizational development.

This time, two authors from one of Spain's most respected business schools, ESADE, try to whip up another fable cum business/motivational book, as an addition to the existing menu of bestsellers. Their book is entitled, "Good Luck: Create the Conditions for Success in Life & Business" (Jossey-Bass 2004). The two authors also happen to be marketing experts with Alex Rovira being the co-author of the Spanish version of the book, "Understanding the Customer" and Fernando Trias de Bes being the co-author (with Philip Kotler) of "Lateral Marketing." How they get in touch with readers to inspire them to success through the book is a test of their marketing savvy.

A different fable

"Good Luck," differentiates itself from other books, by providing two inspirational stories—a story within a story. The first is a modern story of two old friends who meet by chance 50 years after they last saw each other as children. The two friends are a study in contrast: Max started out poor as a rat and ended up a wealthy businessman while Jim, who inherited a fortune, ended up practically a pauper. Ironically, the unsuccessful friend pointed to luck as the cause for his failure and the success of the other. As they ruminated on their fortunes, Max tells Jim a fairy tale that helped him achieve his success.

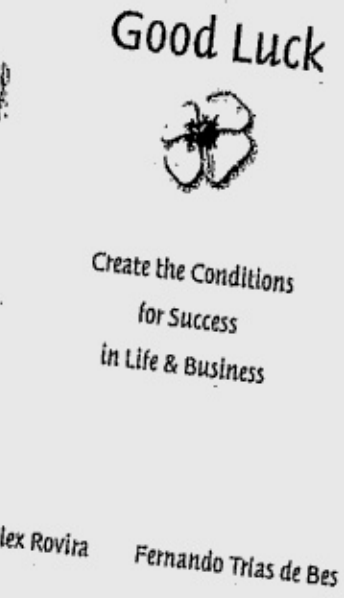
The fairy tale seems like any other ordinary fairy tale, complete with knights, enchanted forests and magical creatures. It even has the wizard Merlin thrown in for good measure. The tale begins when two knights out of thousands take up Merlin's challenge to find a magic clover in the Enchanted Forest. Each of the knights meets several creatures of the forest. Each encounter leads one to failure and the other closer to success with one knight earning the prize of "finding" the much sought after clover at the end of the tale.

Trite though the characters and the storyline appear to be, the reader can get caught up in the story as it unfolds since the tale becomes more and more relevant to the modern world. In the tradition of fairy tales, the book offers moral lessons, 10 of them in fact, as a Good Luck Rule is offered after each chapter. Then, at the end of the book, the mother of all lessons is offered, the Moral of the Story being, of course, that "Creating Good Luck consists only in… creating the conditions."

Lessons galore

With all these goody-goody conclusions, amazingly enough, the book doesn't come off as sentimental muck. It can even soften the most hardened of corporate hearts. Why? Perhaps the reason may be that all of us have very personal experiences of successes and failures at work and in life. Most of us may even view that we have more of failures than successes and that only a few "lucky" individuals are consistently successful. We may even wonder how we can ever hope to lift ourselves from our failures. Thus, the story can evoke from the reader a strong sense of empathy and the lessons, touchy-feely though they may be, grip our emotions and tug at our heartstrings.

My guess is, the authors might just get lucky and end up with a best-seller. Like fairy tales that are never forgotten even when we grow up, this "fable," and its moral lessons, once read, may become corporate legend as it empowers people to hold their destinies in their own hands in the workplace and in life.



'I want to be a preschool teacher!'

By Tita Datu Puangco

I READ your advice column at inq7 online and I am familiar with Ancilla when I worked as a consultant for a search company in the same building. I have been working in human resources for about seven years now. At present, I am an HR officer of a small IT company in Makati. However, lately I no longer feel good about my job. I no longer like recruitment work the way I liked it before. It feels so tiring now, dragging myself to work lately. I also had a baby this year.

I have been trying to apply as a preschool teacher since this is the career I wanted in the first place when I graduated from college. I did not pursue my dream because of my parent's advice. Now, I feel that I want to be a preschool teacher and retire as a preschool teacher. However, I cannot easily get a job as a preschool teacher because I do not have a background in education. Could you advise me on what is the best way to get a job as a preschool teacher without having to get units in education? I once heard of my friend, who was not an education but a Physical Therapy graduate. He has no experience in teaching. Instead, he worked as a telemarketer but landed a job as a preschool teacher. I applied in the same preschool but did not get the job. I was wondering what could have gone wrong.

If I will not be given the chance to work as a preschool teacher then I will probably be in HR for the rest of my career life. However, I think that I cannot get a job at a multinational company because I cannot express myself very well in English. I have asked some institutions offering English communication skills. However, I cannot afford their fees. I cannot confidently converse in straight English using the right words and grammar especially in front of someone during interviews. Sometimes, even in my present task I have difficulty interviewing applicants who are well-versed in the English language. I don't really like to mingle and talk to people. I am not even a reader. How do you think I can possibly improve on my skills so that I can land a job even as a trainer in a multinational company or perhaps as a freelance consultant? Thank you very much.

Education Advocate

Thank you for your letter. First of all, as a working mom myself, I can empathize with your situation. You are trying to balance work and caring for the baby, often through difficult nights what with the feeding and changing of diapers that need to get done. Ask yourself whether or not the reason you are dragging your feet to work is because of fatigue or perhaps postpartum blues. I suggest at this point, you don't make an immediate change in terms of career. First, gain your balance in your new role as a mother. Change experts suggest the best way to handle change is to do it one major change at a time. Otherwise, you will feel overwhelmed and change becomes more difficult.

Once, you have found the comfortable rhythm in balancing work and motherhood, and then you may proceed. My first suggestion is for you to go into career planning. Think through carefully your life vision and mission. Also surface your life values, they will provide the anchor when you have to decide on conflicting actions. This is best done in unity with your husband. As your life partner, he would need to be supportive of your goals and decisions.

Then, reflect on the type of work that will fulfill you as a person. Assess your personality. I am sure you can ask your friends who are into testing for a temperament inventory to validate if you are an introvert. You mentioned you "don't like to mingle or talk with people." If you are, then a job in human resources, specifically recruitment would be stressful. Develop a list of skills and competencies you have gained the past years. This list will help you think through possible job options that will bring out the best in you.

If you think becoming a preschool teacher is still for you, then develop a job search plan. You are aware of the basics required since you currently do recruitment work. Prepare a great resumé that outlines clearly without exaggeration your work experiences and competencies. Then, practice for a job interview. Simulate the questions that will be asked and the answers you will give. Rehearsing for an interview gives you greater competence and confidence. Move on to prepare for practice teaching. Deal with a subject that you are most familiar with. Armed with these tools, try to get a list of preschools around the place where you live and send your resumé. I assume you want to stay close to home. Then follow through with phone calls or personal visits. Come across as a professional.

If you decide to stick to the field of human resource management, then you have to invest and improve your English language skills. I went over your letter. My assessment is you have the basic vocabulary and proficiency in written language. You are right on the lapses, you have on occasion, wrong word use and grammatical errors. If you can't afford to attend formal courses, then get a friend or relative who is willing to act as your tutor for free. Agree on daily English conversation for 10 to 20 minutes. Tell your tutor to correct you and give you feedback at the end of the session. Another way is to go to the bookstore and buy English language tapes that you can listen to while caring for your baby. Oral English is a skill that is learned through constant practice. You need to have the will power to invest time and effort. All the best.

Ancilla has need for 10 human resource and organization development consultants for its 2005 expansion. We prefer individuals who are experienced and totally available. Please send your resumés in December in time for our January consultant orientation and training.

(Ms Puangco is CEO and chair of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send feedback through e-mail to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph *or fax to* 892-2902.)

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WOULD you like to be part of a family that can help you in your career growth and development? Join the People at Work community where members support each other in the quest for a better career and life. People at Work columnists, writers and editorial staff will also be part of this group to lend you a helping hand. Working professionals, jobseekers, human resource executives and practitioners, managers, trainers, consultants and all others willing to share and help are welcome to join. Members will have access to updates and discounts on People at Work events, advice from People at Work columnists and writers and other members, chat schedules with members and "eyeball" events. To join, send your name, gender, civil status, age, contact number, e-mail address, company name and position title (if applicable) to peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph or fax to tel. no. (632) 938-2092 or text to 02-937-0376.

What does it take to start an HR consulting practice?

By Roberta Chinsky Matuson
HR Monster Contributing Writer

AH, the life of an independent HR consultant: Work when you want to work, work only on interesting projects, answer to no one but yourself and make lots of money. Sounds great.

That's what comes to many people's minds when they start thinking about going out on their own. But you need to know the reality of what it takes to start an HR consulting practice.

Jack-of-all-trades

In the corporate world, resources are at your fingertips. Need help with a computer problem? Just call the help desk. Want to launch a new product? Pull together a team of people and have them work on the marketing plan.

An independent consultant, on the other hand, has to do it all. Just ask Helene Buchler of Wellesley, Massachusetts, who has been an independent HR consultant since March 2001. She's the CEO of her own firm, as well as vice president of marketing and sales, IS, chief financial officer, project manager and administrative assistant. The hat she wears depends on the hour of the day.

Not only does Buchler have to switch gears at a moment's notice, but she also has to continually market her services while completing the projects she already has.

If you are planning to go out on your own, be sure you enjoy multitasking, because you will be doing a lot of it.

Weathering ups and downs

Most people do the math before they cut ties with the corporate world. It usually goes something like this: They figure they can bill 30-plus hours a week at a certain rate and all will be fine. It looks good on paper, but don't expect to make it in the first or second year.

Gail Finger, principal of Amherst, Massachusetts-based Finger Consulting, has been in practice for two years. She advises those considering going off on their own to "think about whether or not you can tolerate not having a regular salary and benefits."

Because Finger had been self-employed before, she knew what she was getting into, and she describes her journey as "exciting, rewarding and fun." Even so, she notes, "The first year can be very stressful." Find out beforehand if the people closest to you support your decision to start your own business.

There will be some months where you make great money. Then there will be some months where you seriously contemplate taking a second job to make ends meet. Be sure you have enough money in the bank to weather the ups and downs.

Be realistic

Don't underestimate how long it will take to get your practice off the ground. Buchler estimates it will take at least a year to meet expectations. Finger believes it takes two years to get things going.

Neither Buchler nor Finger foresaw the downturn in the economy, so it may take them even longer to build their businesses.

If your expectations are unrealistic, you will end up extremely frustrated and may even shut down just as things are about to take off. A reasonable timetable will help you stay on track.

Be prepared to sell your heart out

Sales is a major part of independent consulting. After all, most independent consultants are not in positions to hire sales forces when they first open their doors. If you are going to succeed, you need to be prepared to sell your heart out.

If you are not comfortable with your selling skills, consider enrolling in a sales training course.

(To be continued next week.)

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Work deadlines multiply risk of heart attack sixfold

PARIS—The pressure of meeting an important deadline at work increases by a factor of six the risk of suffering a heart attack within 24 hours, Swedish doctors say.

A short burst of intense pressure appears to have greater strain on the heart than accumulated stress over 12 months, according to their study, carried out among 3,500 people aged between 45 and 70.

The research appears on Tuesday in the Journal of Epidemiology and Health, published by the British Medical Association (BMA).

The Karolinska Institute study also suggests that praise from the boss could also be a risk factor for employees with weak hearts.

In some cases, workers who were beavering away on an important job and were praised by their superior were felled by a heart attack within a day.

That risk is hard to quantify, though, because it is unclear whether the stress could be attributable to the deadline, the boss or both.

The data come from people in the Stockholm area who filled in questionnaires and responded to interviews and health examinations between 1992 and 1994.

AFP

Pinay programmer develops systems for Singapore banks

From page B16

in the office early to plunge into the development phase of a project. She can't afford to tarry because often, she handles as many as three projects at one time. According to her, the work environment in Singapore is fast-paced. "Deadlines they set are often aggressive so you have to work extra hard to be able to achieve it," she says.

Surviving the culture

More than six years working with the Singaporeans, she has learned the virtue of always delivering on time. At first, Argosino was not used to the "no excuses" policy of her employers. And of course it is not enough to be just on time. Assuring quality results is a given. "This kind of work culture was really very overwhelming in the beginning, but I've slowly adapted to it. Work traits such as being keen to details and meeting deadlines on time are already ingrained in me," she says.

Adapting to this different culture is critical to surviving because stress is the number one hazard of working in such an environment. Argosino swears that there are quite a number who have succumbed to the stressful and demanding corporate culture of the country and have crossed the borderline of sanity as a result.

Aside from stress, Argosino also has to deal with a multi-racial environment. After coping with being alone in a foreign place away from the comforts of family and home, she has to adjust to the different work habits of several ethnic races—Chinese, Malay and Indian. She claims that working in an environment where people speak in different tongues could sometimes get distracting and intimidating particularly when she's gathering technical data from end-users who are more comfortable with Malay, Mandarin or Tamil. Although most are bilingual and can speak English fairly well, their heavy accent makes it difficult for Argosino to communicate effectively.

Benefits and conveniences

In spite of the many challenges, Argosino has stayed for as long as she has because of the job's equally many benefits. In fact, after marrying another OFW who also works for another bank in the city, she agreed to continue their life together in the tiny republic. According to her, being a systems analyst in Singapore is very enriching in many ways. For one, working away from the comforts of home taught her to fend for herself. "When I left for Singapore in May of 1998, I didn't even know how to iron and wash my clothes. But when I came here I had to do it," she recalls laughing.

Aside from the financial rewards, which is very considerable she claims as attested by her large collection of signature bags, Argosino enjoys the challenge. The whole project development stage is taxing and demanding but also very rewarding. "I love the challenge of being able to accomplish a project and actually see that the end-result help the users cut down processing time and made them more productive."

Although the traffic-plagued streets of Manila will always be home for Argosino, she can't complain about Singapore's efficiency, cleanliness and safety. She could have worked for multinational corporations in western countries but she chose Singapore. In Singapore, she gets to enjoy the privileges and conveniences of a first world country that is only three hours away from her hometown by plane.

Opportunity for Pinoys

A computer science graduate from the De La Salle University in Manila, she claims her Information Technology major is a great advantage. The hands-on training and the theoretical framework included in the curriculum helped her in the systems development cycle. But she also acknowledges the fact that a lot of professionals have excelled locally and abroad without a computer-related degree. In fact, Argosino has several coworkers who are business and engineering graduates.

Argosino encourages those who are geared towards the IT industry to consider working in Singapore. "Singapore is still opening up its doors for highly skilled foreign workers. There are still opportunities here for IT related work," she says. She believes that our professionals could easily compete with the best in the world. "Our country has a huge potential with the emerging outsourcing trend because of our highly skilled and creative workers." Argosino adds that Filipinos adapt easily and could, therefore, excel in Singapore. Although she warns that Singaporeans expect a high level of performance, she is confident that Filipinos will fare well in the fast- paced world of the lion city. After all, she adds with a smile, "*maabilidad ang* Pinoy!"

PEOPLE at WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Raul O. Marcelo
Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

Text us your feedback: inquirer paw name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Pinay programmer develops systems for Singapore banks

ARGOSINO CANDY G. VILLANUEVA/CONTRIBUTOR

By Candy G. Villanueva
Contributor

LOCATED in one of the crossroads of the world, Singapore is a thriving city with an economy that belies its diminutive size. At roughly 633 sq km, Singapore is populated by a little more than four million people. A small fraction of this tiny population is composed of overseas Filipino workers. The progressive city relies on a strong Information Technology backbone composed of quite a number of skilled Filipinos to keep the economic wheels turning. In the Management Information Systems Analytics group for consumer banking of the Development Bank of Singapore for example, a Filipina is responsible for the bank's different software applications. Geraldine Argosino is just one of the many Filipino systems analysts and programmers in Singapore.

Systems development

As systems analyst and programmer, Argosino is responsible for translating business specification requirements into its technical aspect by developing a system or an application. She coordinates with end-users frequently to gather data. After data collection, she proceeds to analysis then to development. But it doesn't stop there. She also handles system and integration testing. Post-production support like troubleshooting is also necessary. Before she can even complete the development phase, she is presented with another project to work on. Most of the time, her projects overlap. She often finds herself in the midst of three project phases—user-acceptance phase, development phase and post-production phase. Argosino is skilled in Visual Basic, Systems Query Language Server, Oracle, scripting and Crystal reports among others. Aside from being knowledgeable in different software and applications, she believes that good analytical skill is a must.

One of the most important financial centers of Asia, Singapore boasts of having over 130 banks. Most of these financial institutions rely on e-banking and financial systems designed by talented and creative Filipinos like Argosino. In fact, she was part of the team who developed modules to enhance the country's Citibank Sabre system. She also helped develop business systems for a global consumer banking group in Singapore and handled a project for Overseas Union Bank.

After a heavy dose of caffeine, Argosino is

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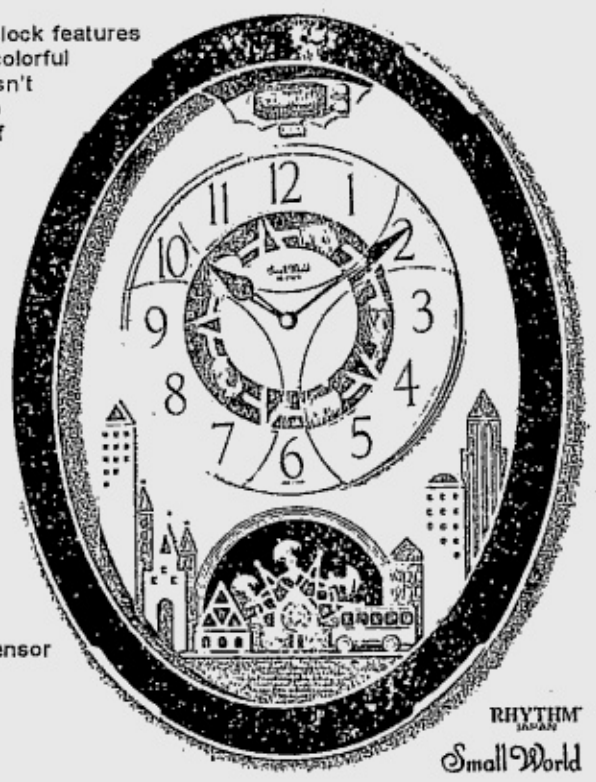

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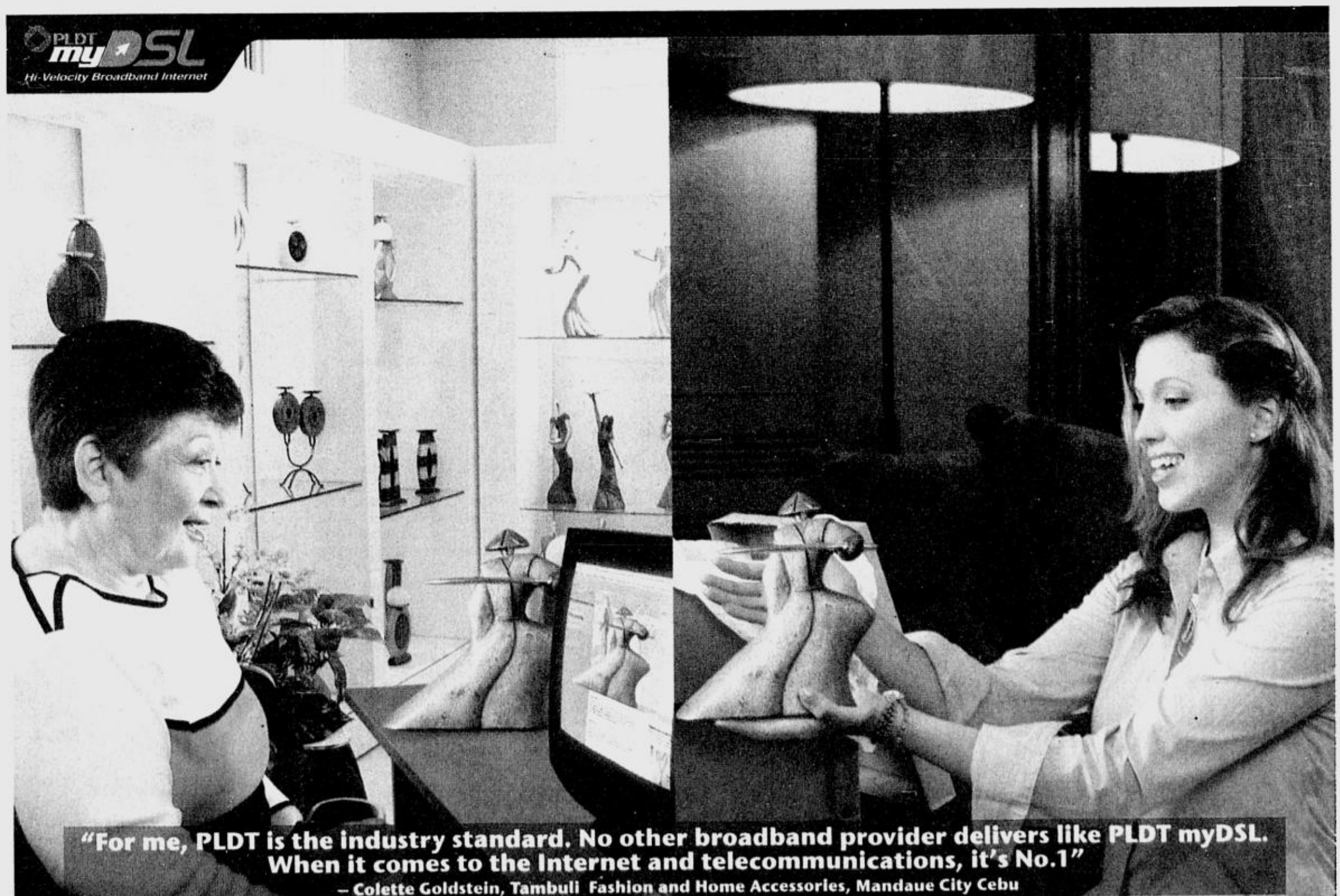

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Filipino skills prove parts are worth the sum of the car

By Tessa R. Salazar

(First of three parts)

YOU may not know it but you may have been driving cars, sport utility vehicles (SUVs) or Asian utility vehicles (AUVs) whose wiring harness, gearboxes (transmission), tires, batteries, brakes, clutches, filters, radiators, silencer, exhaust pipes and alloy wheels are auto parts that have already been developed in, and are being exported from, the Philippines.

Notwithstanding the fact that it "only" has 256 auto parts manufacturers as compared to Malaysia's 350 and Thailand's 1,700, the Philippines is seen to have more potential to develop and export other auto parts because of the quality of the skilled manpower Filipinos have been known for.

These parts that have potential to be developed are steel and aluminum castings such as magwheel centerpieces and magwheel access, automachinery parts, auto wheel rims and discs, then rubber parts like automotive seals, O-rings, transmission supports, engine supports, suspension bushings, radiator supports, shock absorber bushings, oilseals and oil filters.

Filipino auto parts makers have the potential to develop interior parts such as the seat assembly, upholstery for car seats, door trims, visor and headlining, carpets and fabricated parts like the console box, radiator shrouds and mud guards. That's not all. Filipino skills can also manufacture plastic parts such as windshield, carpet and siding clips, knob and guide, bezel and fusebox, as well as electrical components such as auto transmission units, alternators, starters and parts, car stereo and speakers, glass parts like the auto tempered glass and the design.

Fabrication and repair of plastic injection and die casting molds and tool and die design, among others, can also be done here.

The local strategy seems to be, if we can't build a car ourselves, then we'll settle for making the parts—and as many of them as possible. The goal is to have more Philippine-made parts installed in more vehicles.

Out of the 256 auto parts makers found in the country, 103 are members of the Motor Vehicle Parts Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (MVPMAP). Exactly 70 percent of these auto parts and components manufacturing companies are considered SMEs (small and medium enterprises), meaning these are 100 percent Filipino owned. The rest have multinational affiliations. Some of the auto parts makers who are not members of the MVPMAP are suppliers from Japan that were brought in by carmakers, said MVPMAP's Romeo Villadolid. These parts makers are under the umbrella of the car manufacturers and under their vertical integration, he added.

RP's 'little Detroit'

Who would think that Sta. Rosa, Laguna, with a land area of 5,000 hectares (or 54.14 square km), which is the south corridor of Luzon island and along the coastline of Laguna Lake would become the "little Detroit of the Philippines"?

Lying 45 km south of Manila, 12.3 percent of Sta. Rosa's land is still devoted to agricultural production. Figuratively, though, that is just the tip of the awakening dragon's head.

Sta. Rosa is home to other types of "plants," automotive assembly plants, that is. It has become home to Ford, Isuzu, Honda, Nissan, Toyota, Star, Columbia Motors and many other auto parts makers. The P4-billion, 30,000-square-meter Ford Philippines facility has current production of about 15,000 units. Its optimum capacity is 40,000 units a year. So far, Ford Philippines has exported 25,000 units since it started production in 2002. Its export markers are Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore. It has reputed itself as the sole exporter of CBU vehicles to its neighboring Association of Southeast Asian Nation countries.

Ford Philippines currently exports completely built-up units of the Ford Lynx and Mazda Protégé and Mazda3 sedans, the Ford Escape and Mazda Tribute SUVs to Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia. It also exports completely knocked down units to Vietnam. The Department of Trade and Industry said the Ford export program in the Philippines would convince other auto companies to put up assembly plants in the country and transform it into a CBU exporter.

The Toyota Motor Philippines plant started operations at the Sta. Rosa Complex in 1997. The sprawling complex is located at Barangay Pulong, Sta. Cruz, Sta. Rosa, with a land area of 78 hectares and a plant area of 47,000 sq m. The plant has production capacities of 25,000 units per year (two shifts). It also has a Bicutan plant (Km 15 South Super Highway, Parañaque City), which has a land area of 61,000 sq m and a plant area of 39,000 sq m. It has a production capacity of 24,000 units per year. The Sta. Rosa plant assembles the Corolla Altis, Camry and the old Corolla. The Bicutan plant produces Revo. Its employees number 1,232 as of May 31, 2004. Toyota autoparts manufacturing, meanwhile, has a land area of 147,378 sq m and a plant area of 28,083 sq m. Its products include a G-Type Transmission (for Hilux, Hiace) and it produces 200,000 units per year, adding 5 percent to the domestic sales of Toyota Motor Philippines.

The rest, or 95 percent of the units, are exported to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Vietnam, India and South Africa.

Toyota Autoparts is also a maker of constant velocity joints (for Corolla),

FILIPINO/ C2

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4 more environment-friendly cars plying Singapore streets

By Cesar D. Mangawang

THERE they run. These are Mercedes-Benz "F-Cell" A-Class cars now plying the streets of Singapore. They were handed over on Dec. 3 in Singapore to four prominent partners of DaimlerChrysler as it paves the way for a zero emissions future. This brings to six the total of "super clean cars of the future" now on Singapore roads.

DR. Rainer Thiel

Guests during the handover were Manohar Khiatani, director of Logistics and Transport Cluster of the Singapore Economic Development Board and director for Europe; German Ambassador Andreas Michaelis. Also on hand to answer questions was Dr. Klaus Bonhoff, head of strategy and market development, fuel cell and alternative powertrain vehicles, DaimlerChrysler AG from Germany.

The first one was released by DaimlerChrysler in July to the National Environment Agency for test bedding. The other one will be used by DaimlerChrysler Southeast Asia in the region.

The cars are part of DaimlerChrysler's largest practical fleet testing program for fuel cell vehicles worldwide. Other vehicles involved in the program are Citaro fuel cell buses in Europe, Australia and China, fuel cell vans used for courier services in Germany and the United States and other partnerships in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia.

SIX of these fuel cell cars are now on Singapore roads.

Said Dr. Rainer Thiel, Daimler-Chrysler Southeast Asia Pte. Ltd. president and chief executive officer: "We have received a lot of positive feedback from the people who had a chance to test drive this innovative vehicle. In fact, we got numerous requests from individuals asking how they can be part of this testing program."

According to him, the Singapore government plays an important role in DaimlerChrysler's environment strategy for this part of the world. As a sign of support, then Prime Minister and now Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong visited Moehringen, Germany in June 2000.

Car use

Partners BP Singapore, Conrad Centennial Singapore, Lufthansa German Airlines and Michelin will be using the "F-cell" cars for two years. They make use of the F-Cell cars for a variety of activities.

Said Dr. Michael Jones, general manager, hydrogen, BP Gas Power and Renewables: "BP Singapore employees will be using the vehicle in day-to-day activities. They will not only have the chance to learn more about its hydrogen activities but will record valuable information which will be analyzed as part of a BP-NUS (National University of Singapore) research fellowship program."

Conrad Centennial Singapore's car will serve as a hotel limousine for VIP guests. It can also be transformed to a wedding car for couples who hold their functions in the hotel.

Account managers of Lufthansa German Airlines will regularly use the F-cell car for sales visits to various clients. Lufhansa will be doing market promotions with radio stations in 2005.

Michelin Asia GM Alain Waha said Michelin is committed to promoting and encouraging cleaner and greener technologies, not only through annual Michelin Challenge Bibendum.

Unique relationship

According to Thiel, this unique relationship [with its partners] is going to bring mobility to a higher level. It gives us an opportunity to also bring mobility together with environmental compatibility and thereby make a contribution to the society, he stressed.

Said Thiel: The whole idea on fuel cell technology and sustainable mobility is far too important to be just the focus of one company. That is why we are happy to have found dedicated partners."

Filipino skills prove parts . . .

From page C1

and are produced at a rate of 200,000 units per year as well, of which also 95 percent are exported to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, Vietnam, India and Pakistan.

Sta. Rosa is home to another automotive company, Columbia Motors, as well as several industrial parks such as the Santa Rosa Business Park, Meridian Industrial Complex, Greenfield Development and the Laguna Technopark developed by Ayala with two Japanese partners Mitsubishi Trading Corp. and JFE Steel Corp. (formerly Kawasaki Steel Corp.).

From its initial development of 220 hectares, Laguna Technopark expanded to 400 hectares. It now has a total of 108 locators, of which the automotive sector—car assemblers and auto parts suppliers—accounts for 32 percent out of the sold area.

Exactly 92.35 hectares belong to the automotive sector, reveals Ayala Laguna Technopark Inc. operations manager Lyle Abadia. These are car assemblers and auto parts suppliers.

Located inside the Technopark are Honda Cars Philippines, which has already expressed its intention to export CBUs by 2007. Honda support groups are under Philippine Export Economic Zone Authority. These support groups are allowed to export 70 percent. The 30 percent these support groups are producing automatically goes directly to the Honda Cars Philippines for the assembly.

The technopark is also home to Isuzu Philippines plant, which has a land space of 131,622 sq m and with employees numbering 671. From 2000 to 2003, export units of Isuzu Philippines' CBUs has reached more than 90. It has also shipped to countries such as Vietnam for completely knockdown vehicles, and to Honduras and South America for CBUs.

Star Motors is also found inside Laguna Technopark. Abadia said this plant assembles light truck vehicles.

There are 25 auto suppliers inside the Laguna Technopark, 18 of which are exporting and seven are supplying the local automotive industry. These auto parts makers manufacture audio systems, brakes, airbags and seatbelts, clutch assemblies, vacuum fluorescent displays, plastic ventilators, seat fabrics, car seat assemblies, stamp metal parts for cars and motorcycles, auto seat recliners and some support groups are making clutch and brake parts for Honda.

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Car sales not real barometer; Sportivo up close

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

I CAN'T believe this.

Car sales are down 5.2 percent in January-November?

If so, how come they keep rolling new models out of the assembly lines?

Toyota just recently launched its state-of-the-art Hi-Lux that saw Vince Socco, the missed fella from Toyota Motor Philippines, fly over from his home of three years in Singapore just to attend the shebang at The Fontana at Clark in Angeles City.

And didn't Isuzu also unleash its 2005 Crosswind variant, not to mention the new Isuzu DMax?

I'm getting confused.

* * *

No, I'm not really that confused.

After all these years of covering the automotive industry—is it that long now, almost 20 years?—I've come to realize that sales have not always been reliable barometers of whether or not business is bad in the car world.

The truth is, good sales, bad sales, it doesn't mean much. Every business has its ups and downs. One car company suffering a decline in sales does not reflect the true picture of the industry. One car company's sales woes do not make for a bankruptcy in the entire automotive business.

If at all, car sales are mere indicators and do not necessarily reflect the real state of affairs in the motoring world.

* * *

As this was being written, the Honda Christmas party was just hours away. I promised Tin Tin Reyes that I'd attend the bash at Rockwell, not only because Rockwell is my favorite mall, but also because Honda has always been dear to my heart. Well, not simply because of Arnel Doria, Honda's super-reliable marketing/communications executive who is my *kabaleyan*, but also because I have a high regard for the Honda vehicle itself. The one thing I admire about Honda, besides its efficiency and durability, is its high resale value. A friend of mine had bought a secondhand Honda CR-V a year ago. I saw him recently and he said he has never been happier in his life after he had acquired his CR-V.

Take a bow, Arnel, Tin Tin?

* * *

Isuzu Philippines' launch of the 2005 Crosswind variants recently was also a head-turner in that the highly regarded Isuzu SUV stunned motoring buffs with its new styling and features that cater both to the family man and the yuppie alike.

Isuzu's new babe, the Sportivo, has now become the talk of the town among SUV lovers.

The new addition to the Crosswind family now features large one-piece multireflector headlamps giving an aggressive aura, blazing with brighter illumination for increased visibility during night driving. Its rear combination lamp now presents a chic and fashionable appearance. The sporty six-hole design radiator grille has a distinct characteristic for that rugged and strong bearing. Other outstanding highlights include a trendy two-piece bumper and an eye-catching 15-inch new design alloy wheel.

Through the years, Isuzu has gained the reputation as a manufacturer of vehicles with unmatched engine power and winning looks. The top-of-the-line Sportivo is being paraded as the one that will define the future of SUVs in the country.

With a "little of everything," the Sportivo offers distinct new features such as the bucket seats for driver and passenger, lever-type handbrake handle, center console with integrated cupholders, DVD entertainment system and front facing third-row seat—making the Sportivo another innovation in the Philippine automotive industry.

The 2005 Crosswind variants are still equipped with Isuzu's powerful, efficient and environment-friendly 2.5L 4-cylinder OHV 4JA1 diesel engine. Also, a feature that can only be found in the luxury vehicles—chrome side view mirror with LED (Light Emitting Diode)—is available in the Sportivo, the XUVi and the XUV, plus a sleek, newly designed spare tire cover.

The Sportivo is priced at P1,085,000 for the automatic transmission (A/T) and P1,020,000 for the manual transmission (M/T); the XUVi at P1,060,000 (A/T) and P995,000 (M/T); the XUV at P995,000 (A/T) and P940,000 (M/T); the XT at P790,000 (M/T); and XL at P720,000 (M/T).

* * *

QUOTE ME. Always, a new car is a joy to drive. If you don't drive, the ride is equally satisfying.

'I learned to drive . . .

From page C3

benders or total wrecks. He says that he used to be stopped by traffic policemen more often, for no apparent reason, when he was driving "slowly and meekly... But I blend in quite well now and consider myself a fully fledged Filipino driver. I know all the tricks."

By tricks, he obviously refers to the bad driving habits of Metro Manilans such as driving on the wrong lane, not using the turn signal, counterflowing, loading and unloading passengers anywhere and cutting corners. "My wife used to advise me to be a 'defensive' driver," Ketcher says with a smile. "But if you are, it will take you hours to get anywhere. Sometimes it's better to be an 'offensive' driver." (Come to think of it, as in basketball, isn't offense the best defense?)

Alarmed

Ketcher married his girlfriend, Marisa Buhay, one year after he learned to drive. When his parents flew over to attend the wedding, his father was alarmed by the kind of driving he saw in Metro Manila. After all, the Ketchers come from the United Kingdom, where traffic regulations are strictly enforced 24/7 and road courtesy is practiced more often than not.

Thus Jay Ketcher had to adjust to civilized driving when he went back to his hometown (Warwickshire in the Midlands) with Marisa for their honeymoon. They rented a car and drove to Scotland and Wales. He had to adjust not only to driving on the left side of the road, but also to "the fast roads. The roads there are much faster because they're in good condition."

Ketcher also had to adjust to the UK's driving customs, such as what the flashing of headlights means. Over there, when a driver flashes his headlights at you, he is signaling you to go ahead. Here, it means just the opposite.

In any case, the fact that Ketcher had no accidents while driving cross-country in the United Kingdom proves true the old saying that once you learn to drive in Manila, you can drive anywhere in the world.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: You know the world is going crazy when the best rapper is a white guy, the best golfer is a black guy and the tallest guy in the NBA is Chinese. (Chris Rock)

* * *

(E-mail comments to asevilla@inquirer.com.ph)

'I learned to drive in Manila'

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

LEARNING to drive in Metro Manila takes a lot of courage—more so if you are a foreigner. Look at Jay Ketcher, an Englishman now in his thirties who came here eight years ago to work as an IT consultant. Ketcher's story is unusual not only because he's a Brit, but also because he learned to drive in Manila sans any formal driving lessons at a driving school. And, to top it all, he endured all the travails of learning to drive in Manila with good cheer and a wry sense of humor.

At first, Ketcher was taking a taxi to go to work every day, but in March 1996 he decided to upgrade from commuting to driving. He bought a manual transmission Honda City and got a student's driving permit from the Land Transportation Office. Since he was living in Magallanes Village then, Ketcher practiced driving inside the village. Mastering the manual transmission took some time—he admits that although he would drive very slowly, the car often stalled and other drivers would yell at him.

Novice

These practice driving sessions must have disconcerted Ketcher's Filipina girlfriend, for his future mother-in-law hired a driver for him until he would have gained enough driving skill and experience to venture outside the village. Fortunately or unfortunately, the hired driver was fresh from the province and was also a novice in driving Manila-style. One day, when they were in bumper-to-bumper traffic on an uphill portion of Edsa, the car rolled backward and hit the car behind. So that night, they switched roles: Ketcher took over the wheel and his driver became the passenger.

This arrangement worked just fine, Ketcher recalls, because the Land Transportation and Traffic Code (Republic Act 4136) requires student drivers, when driving, to be accompanied by a duly licensed driver. It also accelerated Ketcher's learning curve so that after a few months of driving daily, he took the LTO exam and got his driver's license.

Even then, as a newly licensed motorist getting used to the turmoil of Metro Manila traffic, Ketcher drove slowly and carefully. "It's quite rough and can be ruthless out there on the road," he says candidly. "But I like to think of the driving here as ordered chaos. Somehow it works. Even though the rules disappear and there's a lot of traffic, everyone manages to get to where he's going."

Dings

He has had his share of minor traffic accidents such as dings and scrapes, but no fender

I LEARNED/ C2

JAY Ketcher, British by birth, considers himself "a fully fledged Filipino driver" after eight years of driving in Manila. AIDA SEVILLA-MENDOZA

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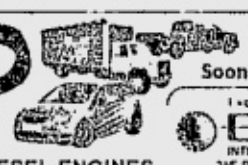

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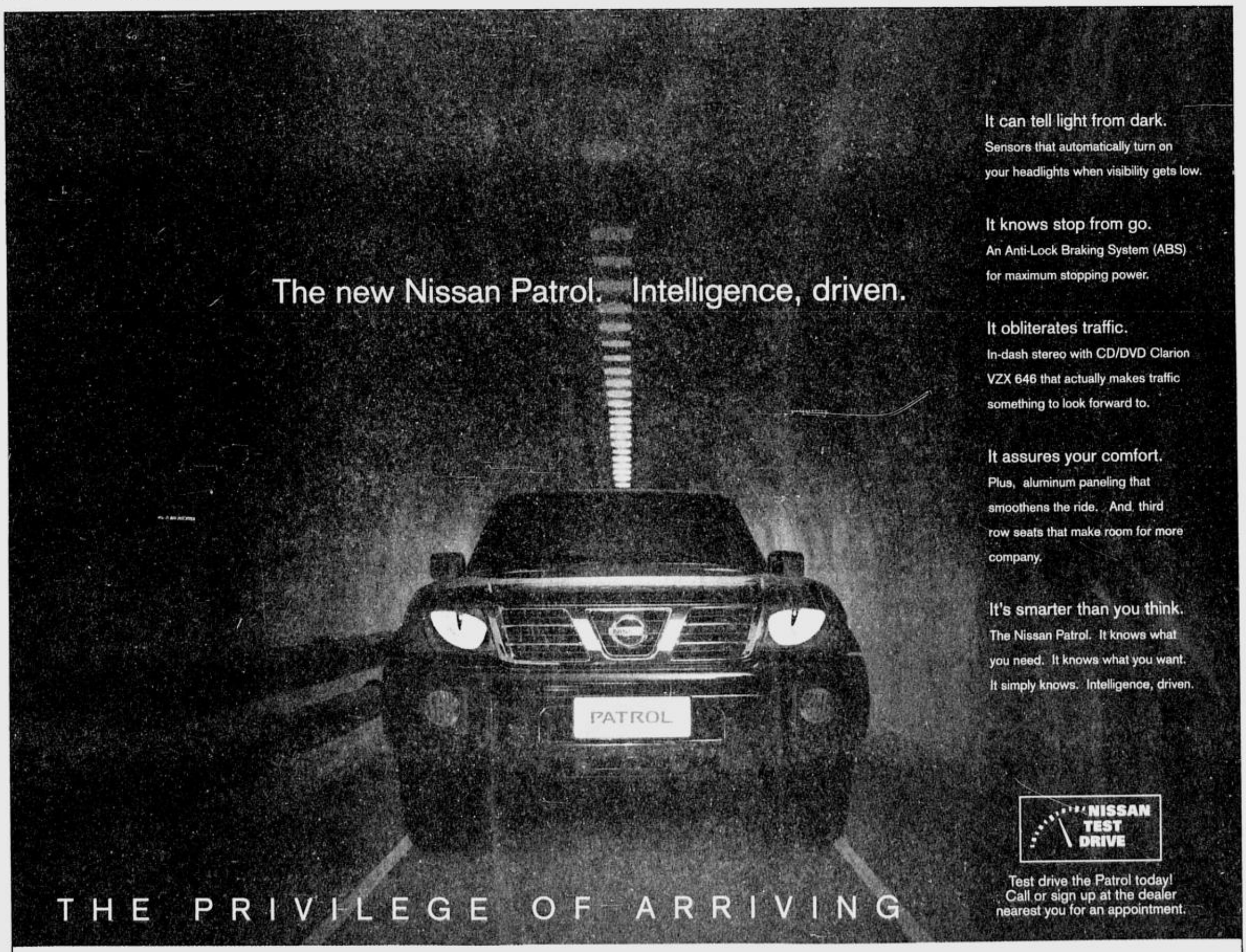

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Little orphan rally

By Andre Palma

COMMENTARY

I AM reluctant to discuss the topic of Philippine motorsports because it is very dear to me. It is most difficult to comment on something one is very passionate about, as it either turns out slanted and biased or sentimental bordering on sappy. This rant seems to be headed for the latter, as I am typing away with tissue box at an arm's length. The focus on rallying further muddles the situation, as this is the driving subculture I subscribe to, even now, just as a mere spectator speculating about its future.

My season and a half in the rallying sun will forever remain a fond chapter of my years as a driver, auto enthusiast and student of motoring. I have taken away many gifts from racing; new skills, friendships and, most important to myself, a sense of the history of automotive rally racing in the Philippines. Many afternoons were spent, over *turon* and soft drinks and now coffee and *sakristan*, listening to several generations of rally drivers and co-drivers recount their tales, both tall and true, of our genesis and the eventual apex of the sport.

There are many interpretations of the sport's Golden Age. Many point to the years of somewhat successful sorties abroad, where Filipinos campaigned toe to toe with WRC (World Rally Championship, the pinnacle of rallying in the world) caliber competition in the United States, China and Malaysia. Some optimists, including myself, look hopefully to the future, when younger, faster, better-equipped drivers can take their skills all the way to the WRC itself. The hope of this ideal seems bleak at best. Despite being the focal motorsport of the '70s and '80s, rallying in the Philippines is at one of its lowest points. The period, from 1999 to 2004, has seen the events dwindle in frequency, with this year seeing only a single multistage rally. Who or what is to blame for this decline of a once burgeoning sport?

2 necessary evils

Money and media exposure are the two necessary evils of any motorsport. The successful juggling act between driver skill, competitive equipment and adequate logistics can only be performed when sufficient funds are available. Without a working and sustainable budget, efforts to race are often limited by the availability of personal funds and a motorsport team's check writer's patience. Sponsorship from companies seeking to get exposure from racing is the next logical and natural step, right? That's how it happens abroad, right? Sponsors ranging from tobacco conglomerates, feminine hygiene products to the US Army pay big money to be associated with some form of motorsport.

Locally, millions of pesos are spent by companies, both large and small, to advertise and sell their products in a dynamic fashion. I'm sure that any number of these companies would line up around the block to associate themselves with the breakneck, knife-edge of danger, often spectacular and sideways discipline of rallying. This would magically solve the problem of fund availability and send us on our way, Philippine flag in hand, to conquer the rallying world. Sadly this statement is far from the truth and completely ludicrous.

Association with a motorsport is one thing, but getting media value out of their peso spent is completely another issue altogether. Who is going to spend millions of pesos for a newspaper release of an event/race that was watched by a few hundred people?

Media value

There has to be professionally delivered media value fairly commensurate to the sponsor's money spent. Until this happens, the existence of rallying is in question, as it is currently orphaned by both sponsors and public interest. A responsible and sustainable relationship must essentially be struck between the racers, organizers and public relations practitioners with the entire community of potential sponsors. A long-term mutually beneficial affiliation between these two groups will allow rallying to grow and prosper; once again allowing us to reach beyond our borders and succeed.

This is not an uncommon dream shared across the Philippine motorsport community. The other disciplines are well on their way in this endeavor. If we are to believe what we see in the media, some drivers and organizations are actually at the doorsteps of the world stage and therefore, closer to the ultimate goal of a Filipino world champion. My balaclava goes off to those who have patiently passed on their craft, nurtured the talent of others and responsibly marshaled what limited resources are available. You guys know who you are. Please accept my heartfelt thanks.

E-mail the author at mons00n@yahoo.com.

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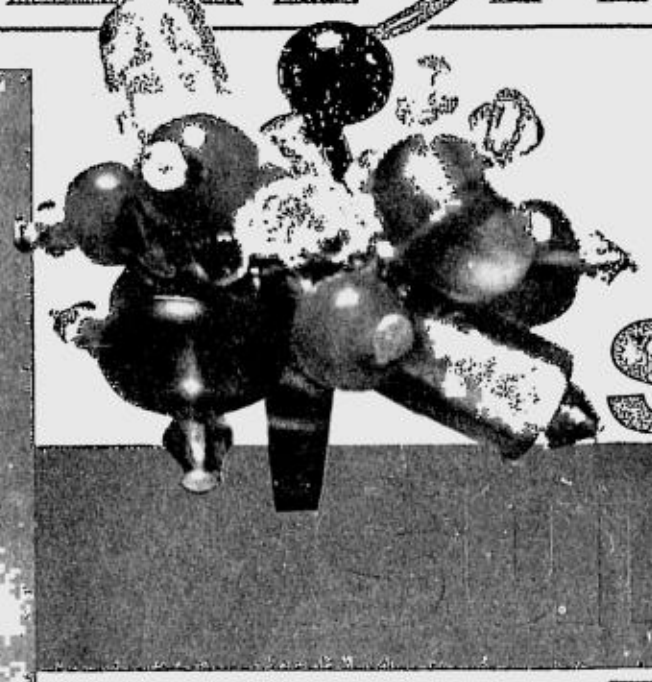

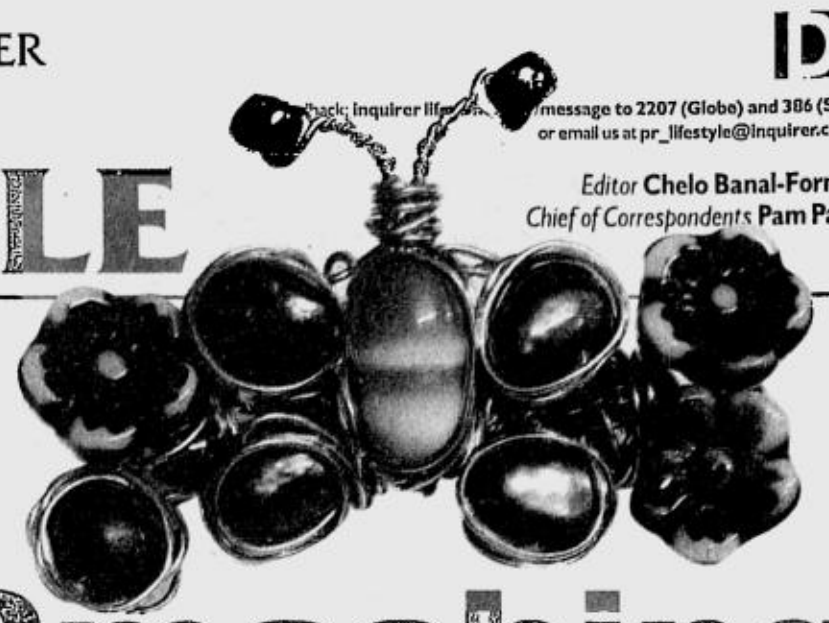

Smashing

Santa's manual

We know Christmas shopping is never easy, so we decided to do the job for you. We invaded the malls, hit the bazaars and tracked down great young entrepreneurs. On these pages we have over a hundred fab gift ideas that you can pass off as your own. We have gifts for gadget freaks, gym junkies, couples, hopeless romantics, bookworms, people who refuse to grow up, food lovers, camera buffs, fashion fans, beach bums, even people we love to hate. And as if that's not enough, we also asked some of your favorite magazines to lend us a hand in helping you find gifts that the good girls and boys on your list would definitely love.

Happy shopping!

By Pam Pastor

IF you've been wading through the hordes of people at the mall trying to look for the perfect gifts for your loved ones, but still you emerge empty-handed, you might want to look elsewhere.

Bazaars are a gold mine when it comes to hunting for Christmas presents. And believe it or not, so are bookstores, a leprosarium and other people's houses.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

SMASHING/ D4

I MET at a Peanutroller at the Green Meadows bazaar one Sunday. The mark-ups, produced by UAP, launched their handmade jewelry line Nuecon just a month ago but already, they've been grabbing attention at bazaars. Shaped like tiny rollers, Peanutroller can work on old necklaces and broken necklaces and also create brand-new ones. Their prices are affordable, ranging from P100 to P800. Call Jinnie at 0917-9606165.

Hunting for unusual presents? Try bazaars, bookstores, other people's houses, even a leprosarium

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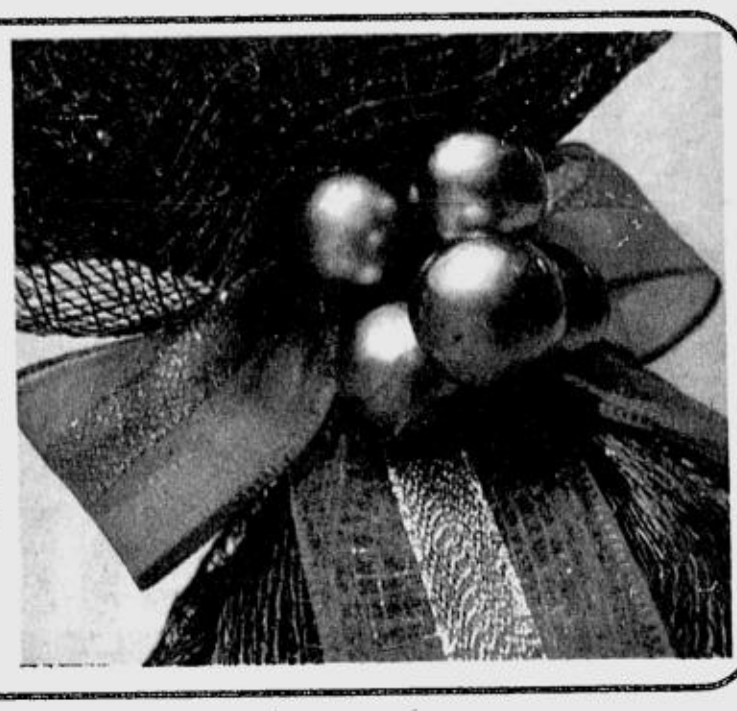
It's a wrap!

Text and Photos by Zee Castro

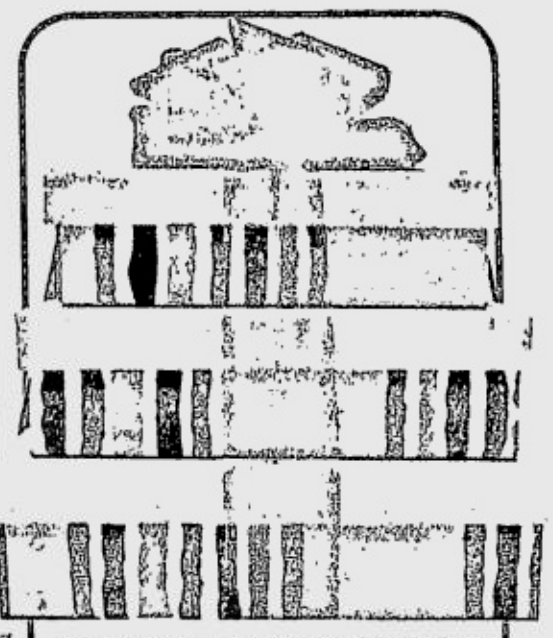
Wrap it Up offers tips to help you create fantastic Christmas presents

E-mail the author at zeecastro@yahoo.com.



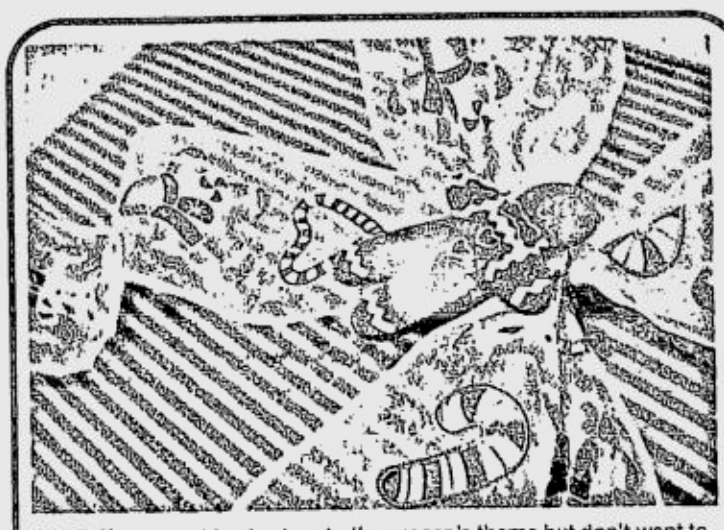
Tip 1: Instead of letting them gather dust along with all your bodega junk, bring life to old Christmas decor by using them to tie up Christmas bundles.
Tip 2: Broaden your wrapping horizons by using other fibers instead of the usual paper wrapper. Local *sinamay* cloth was used to wrap this gift. There are others to try: metallic paper, plastic wraps, *papel de hapon*, even newspapers. A little creativity is all you need.

Tip 3: Though it may be a bit more expensive that regular gift wrapper, boxes can also be gifts in themselves. Choose your loved one's favorite color and jazz up with a wire ribbon.

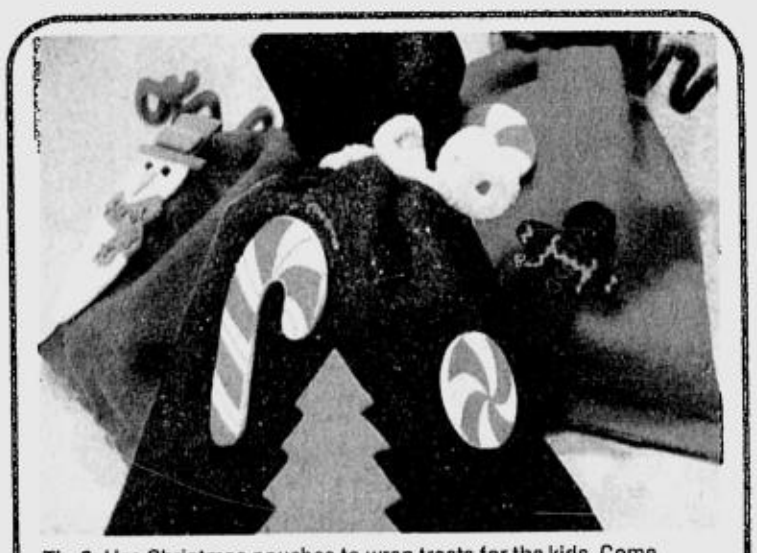


Tip 3: Stacked boxes topped with nice flower bows are visually appealing and a sure way to make that lucky receiver giddy with excitement.

Tip 4: Experiment with different ribbon styles. This flower bow on top of an abaca rope box looks pretty and elegant.

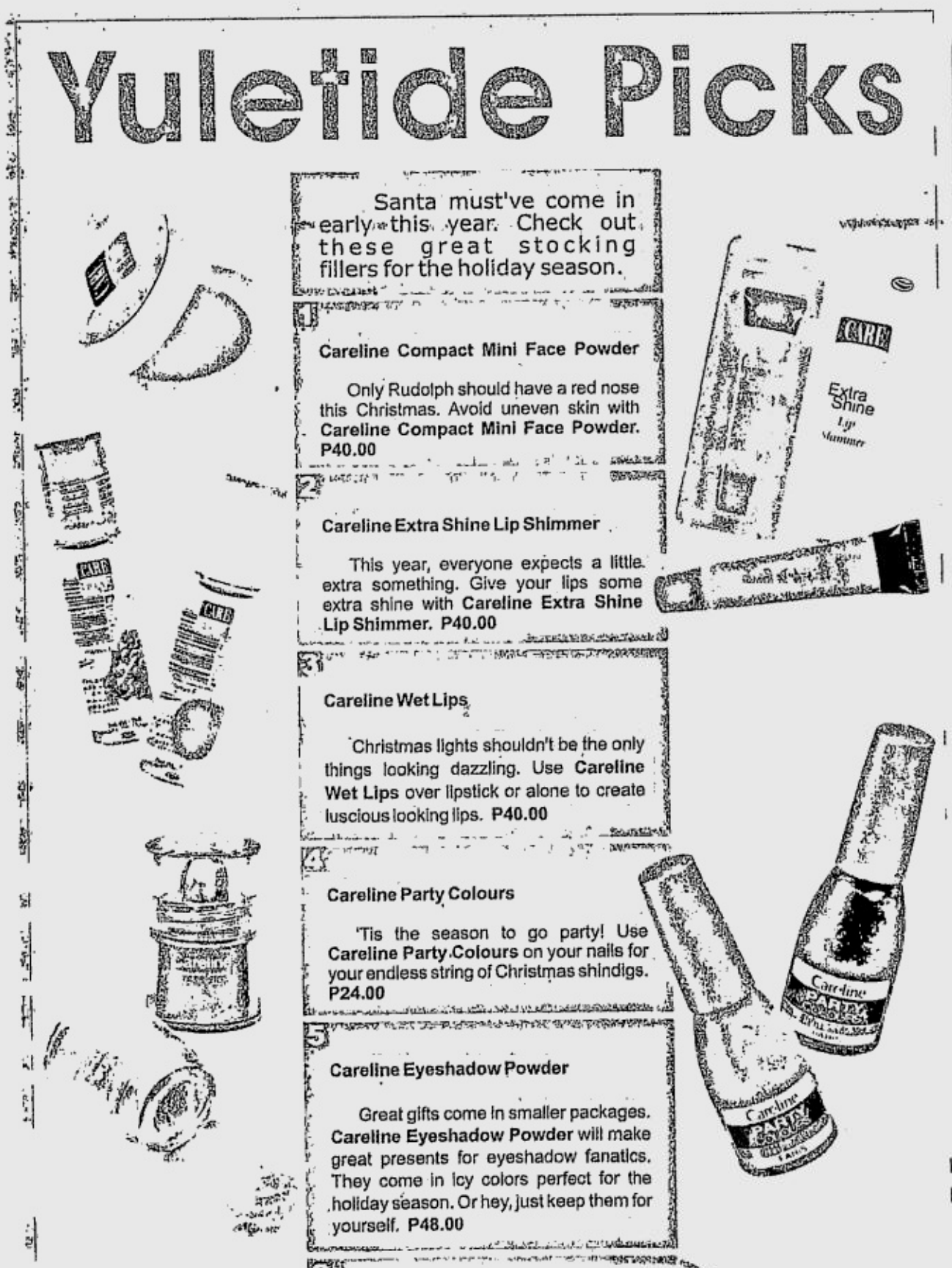


Tip 5: If you want to stay true to the season's theme but don't want to go overboard, mix Christmas-y ribbons and accents with a regular wrapper. The Gingerman ribbon and enhancer are a great contrast to the green stripped wrapped box.



Tip 6: Use Christmas pouches to wrap treats for the kids. Come Christmas get-together, make those *makulit* children settle down a bit by giving them these gaily-wrapped goodies.

Yuletide Picks



Tip 7: Use enhancers to make packages more appealing. This pompom puppy looks adorable.

Tip 8: Gifts for children come best not in a box or a paper bag, but in wrapper that they can tear to bits. It's all part of the Christmas experience every kid (or kid-at-heart) should have.

A Christmas sock hangs from a natural fiber bag.

Tip 10: You can substitute real candies for these enhancers. Make sure to put them just minutes before handing the gift over to the lucky receiver.

Tip 9: Greeting cards make great enhancers for presents, too.

For affordable and adorable gift-wrapping services, visit Wrap it Up at the newly opened Waltermart Makati (Pasay Road corner Pasong Tamo), Waltermart Calamba, Waltermart Sta. Rosa, Waltermart Dasmariñas, Pavillion Mall Biñan, or visit www.wrapitupstore.com. Call (049) 5457525 or 0918-007570 for franchise inquiries. E-mail barretto@wrapitupstore.com

Be a part of our Christmas issue

WE invite you to tell our readers about your favorite holiday memories.

Please feel free to send in entries from your journal, pages from real scrapbooks, e-mail or text exchanges, photographs, poetry, songs, essays, greeting cards—anything about Christmas.

It can be happy, sad, exciting, strange—anything you want.

You can be vague or you can zoom in on one tiny detail—maybe an essay about the madness of Christmas shopping or about the first Christmas Eve you spent away from home.

We want to read about all kinds of Christmas. We want to laugh, we want to cry, we want warm and fuzzy feelings.

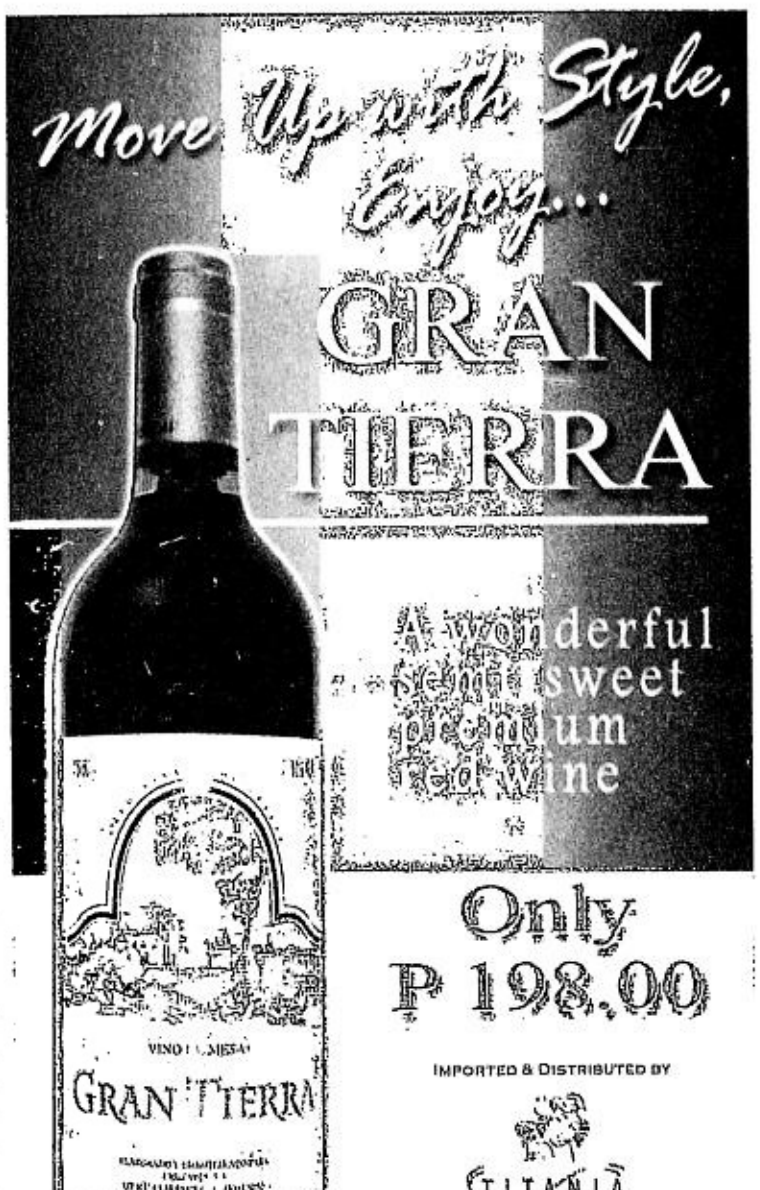
We want our readers to identify with your experiences.

And if you know other people who have stories to share—tell them to send their stories too.

The best entries will be included in our Christmas special.

Let us into your world. Let's make this Christmas one to be remembered.

Please send your submissions to Ls_2bu@inquirer.com.ph by Dec. 17, 3 p.m.



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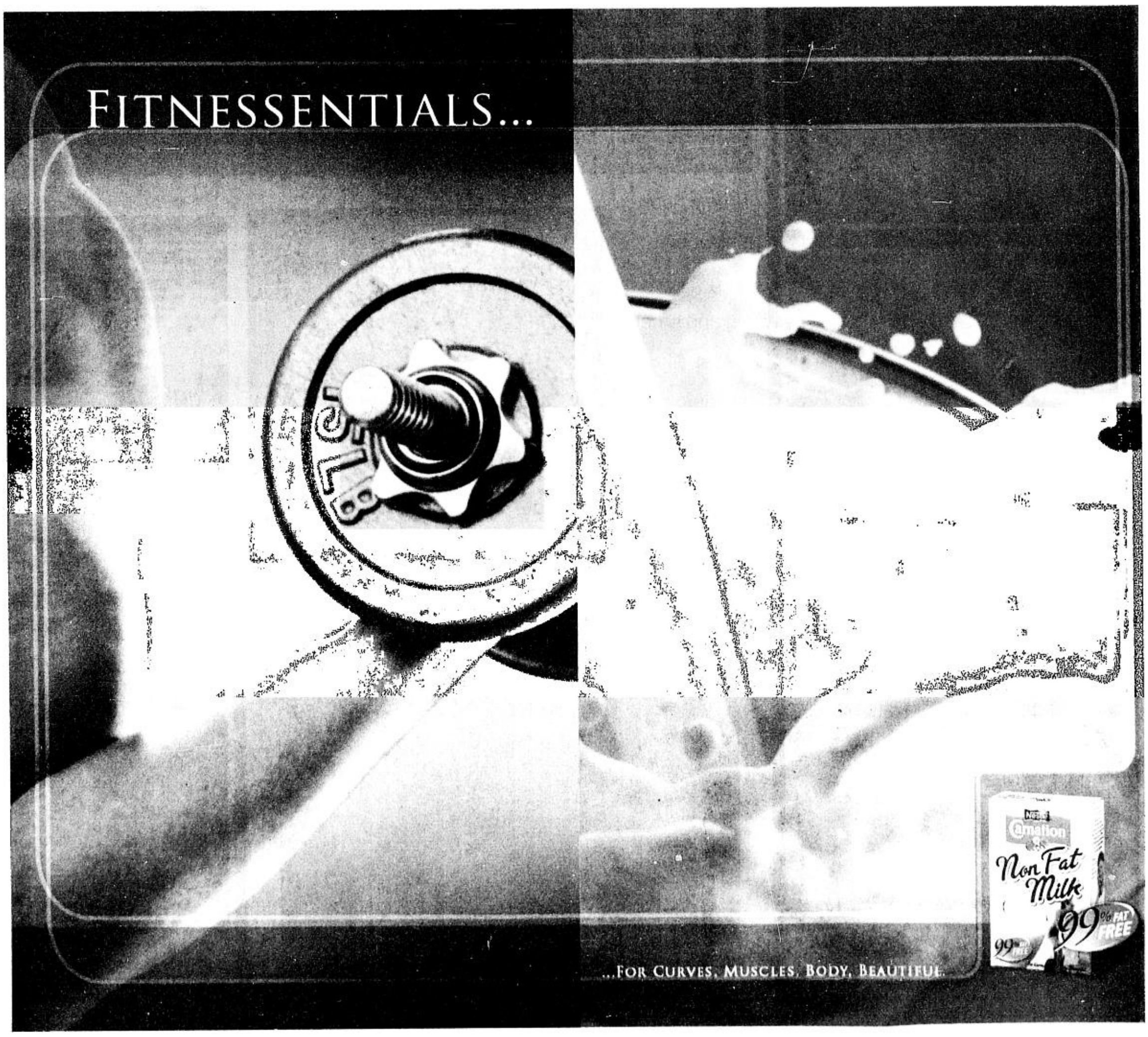
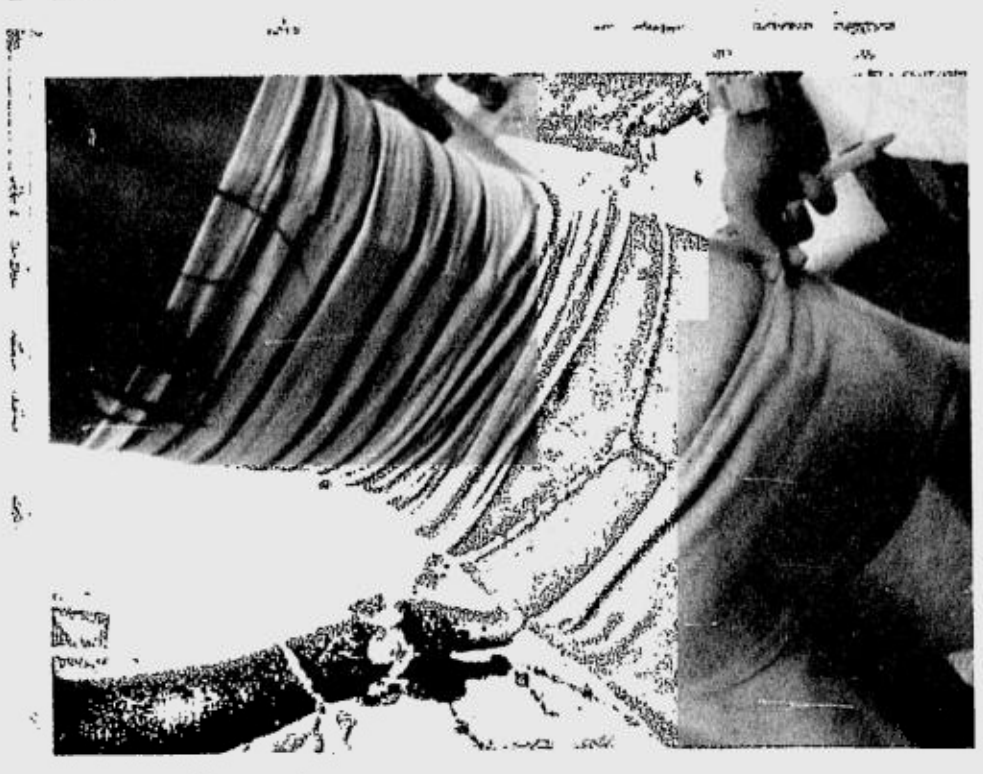
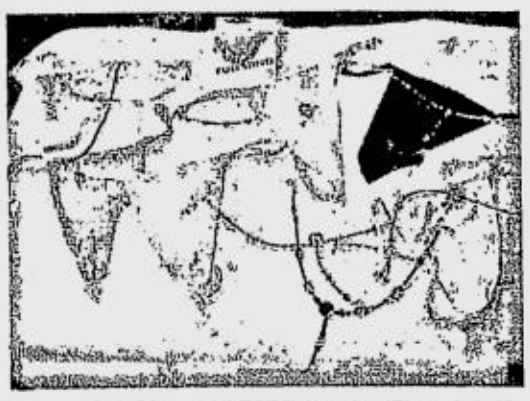
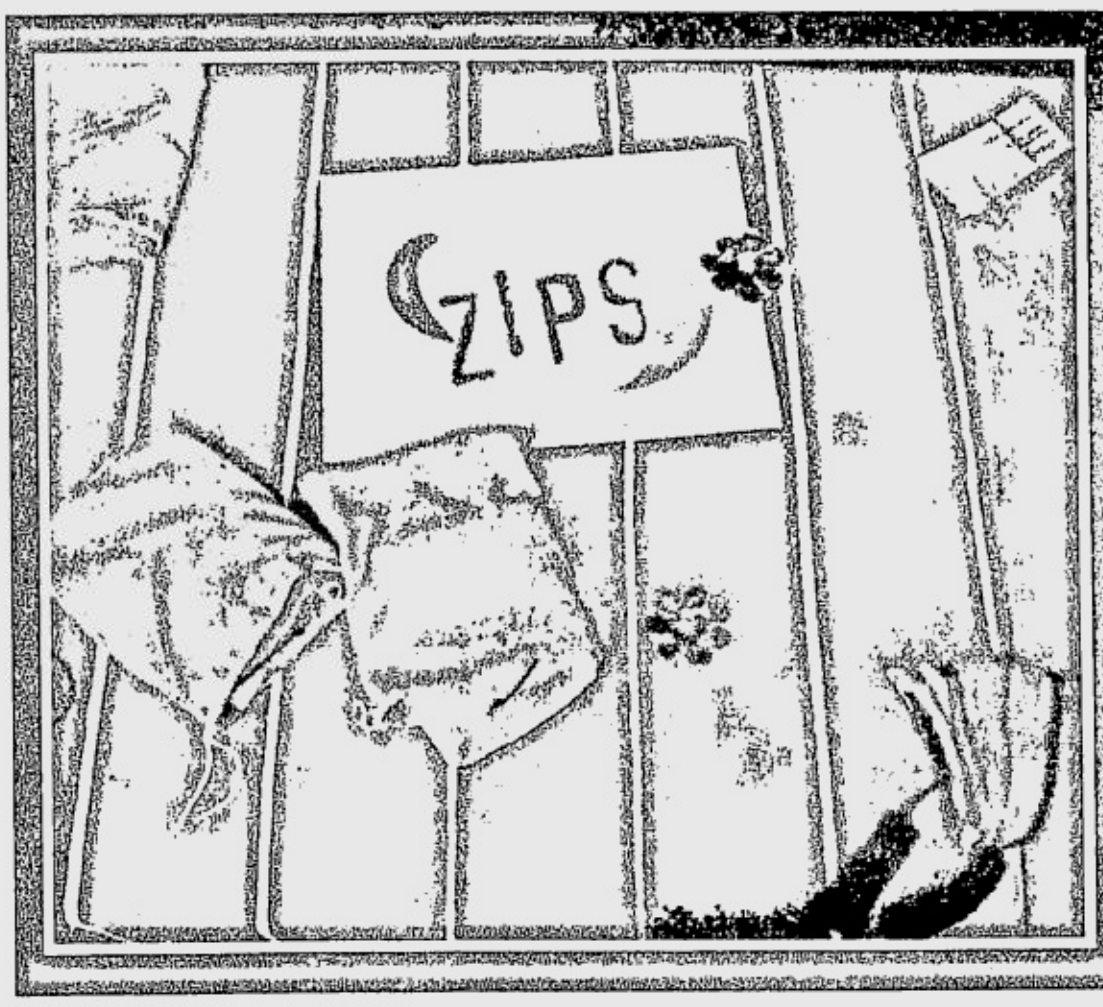




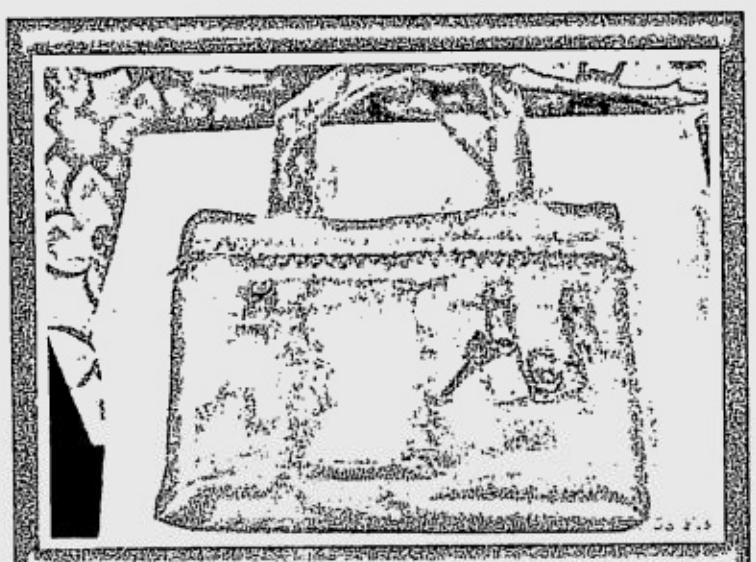
HERE'S something new from Beadnik's Tals Diaz, the girl who brought life to our boring bras with her beaded bra straps. Well, guess what? Now you can now wear beaded thongs. It's the perfect invention for the low-rise generation. A set will set you back P500. Extra beads can be bought for P150. Call Tals at 0917-3705870 for orders. I know someone who should dial her number: Paris Hilton.

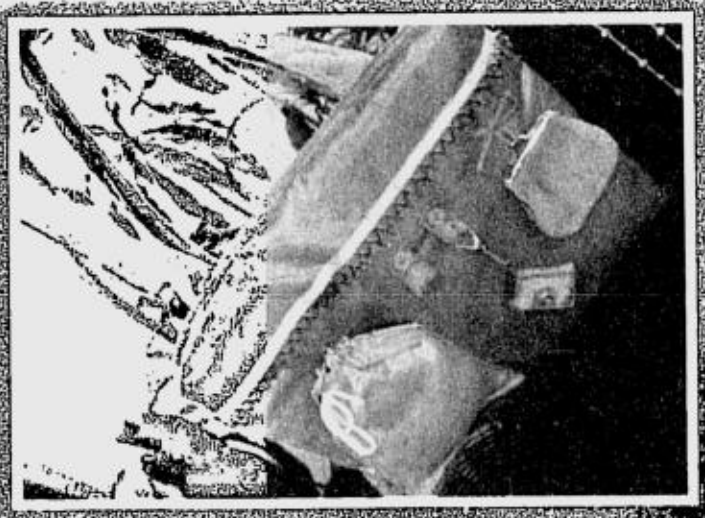


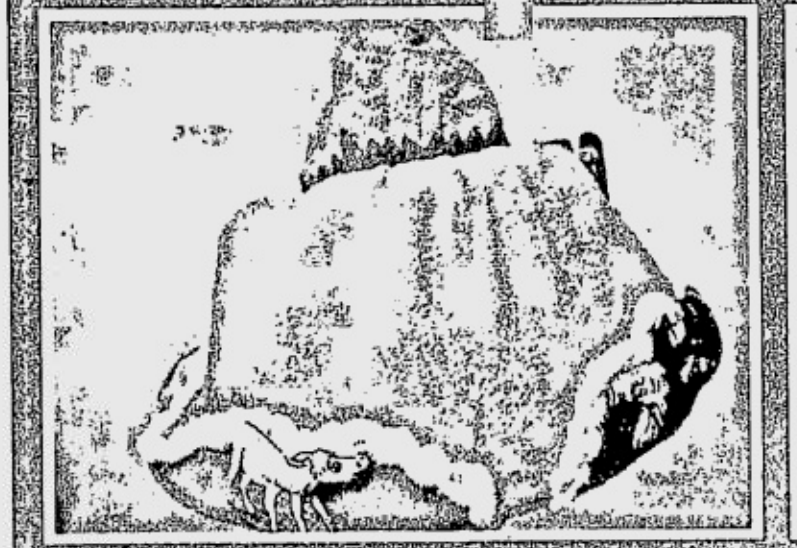


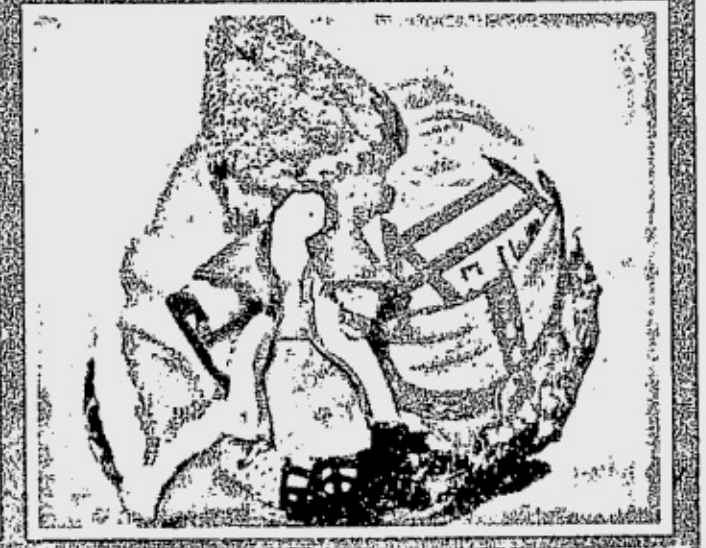
FORGET type-your-tips-to-the-text-form, implored by the pestiness of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) that can't read a multi-pixel comma weighing (what) property and carefully-measured and clean-flowing ribbon. Watching people zipping is beautiful. When you buy Zips from the people behind Planetzip.com, they'll text you instructions. And they're easy enough for you to form with a click. You can purchase Zips at 5 pcs. long with a free Nokia E-mail planetzip@yahoo.com or call 0922-7710539.

Smashing surprises







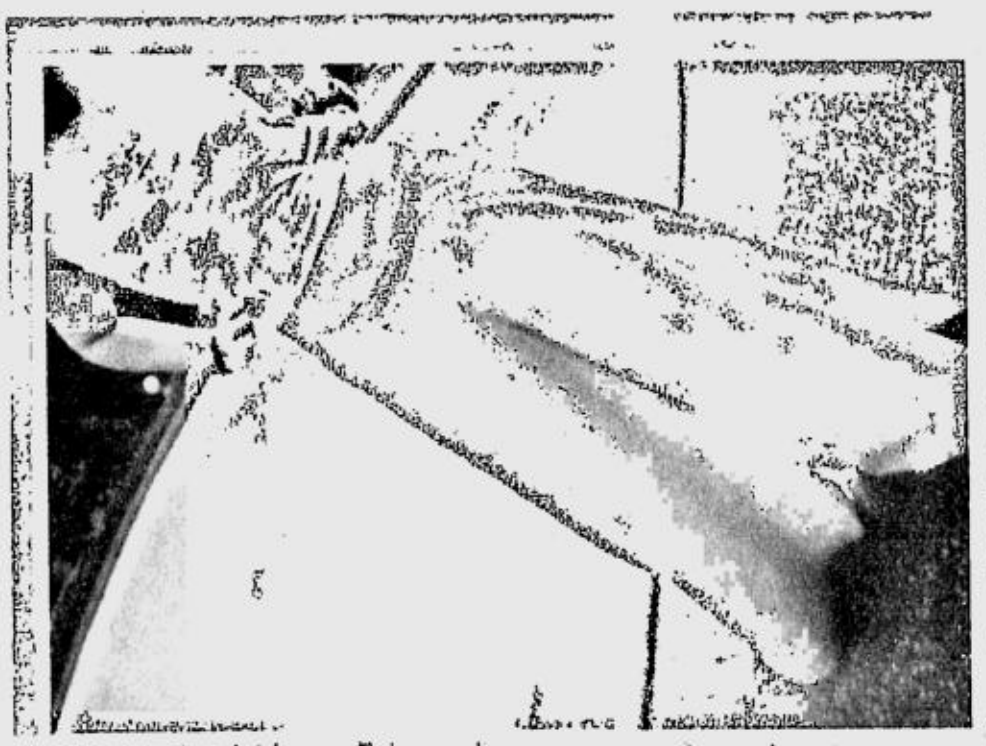


AS A CHILD, one of my most favorite dolls was a three-in-one Little Red Riding Hood doll. At first glance, it looked like a regular doll, but if you turned Little Red Riding Hood upside down and turned her skirt inside out, she transforms into her grandma. And when you turned grandma around, grandma transformed into the Big Bad Wolf. I still have that doll and I don't think I could find anything like it again until I went to the house of the Austrian ambassador to [illegible] the Vienna Boys Choir. I found beautiful three-in-one dolls made by the nuns from Tala Leprosarium. I had my eye on the Rapunzel doll (one side showed the prince climbing the tower—can you believe that?) but to make sure I bought the Noah's Ark doll and I am still completely in love with it. It's a great find at just P300. Stocks have run out since they're a major hit at bazaars. But we're sure the nuns of Tala Leprosarium will make more of their lovely dolls.

Time to look elsewhere for gifts big and small that spell passion, effort and one-of-a-kind charm

ALL PHOTOS BY PAM PASTOR

THE STORYTELLERS had the great idea of offering changing the names of the lead character, friends ar offering, which is called "Santa Got Stuck," also cor bear plays a role in the story). You can ask them to c recipient's name and you can also ask them to deliv storytellers_ltd@yahoo.com

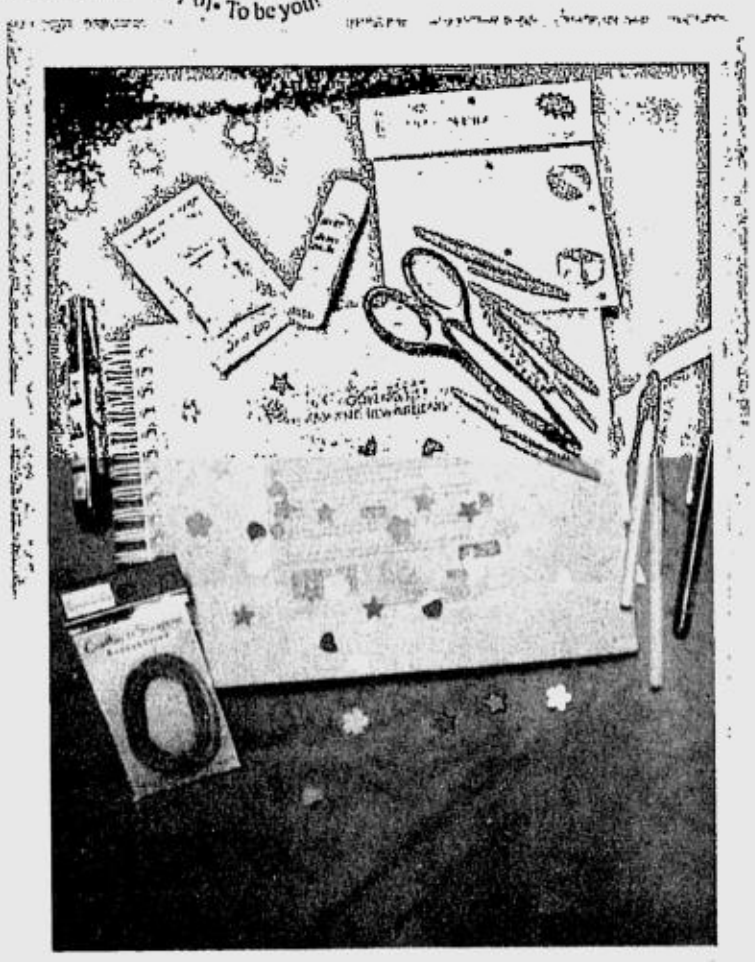


BROWN Belly Bottoms. These ultra-comfy wraparound pants aren't meant to be worn just on the beach. You can wear them anytime, anywhere. Not bad for P650. The tube top's P200. Call Kage at 0917-5292627, e-mail brownbelly@gmail.com or visit www.pbase.com/kage/brownbelly.

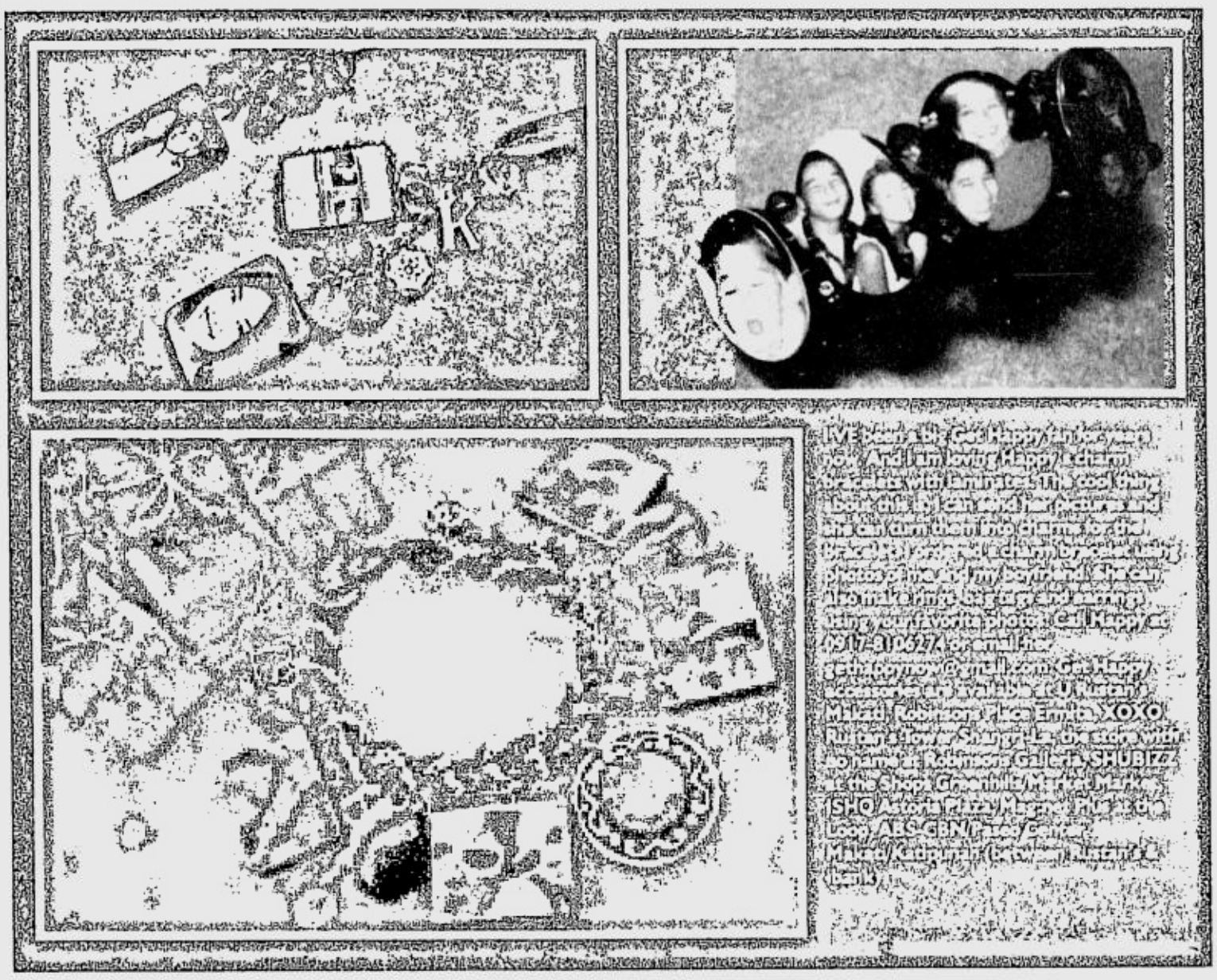
KAGE Gozun and Noelle Hilario's Brown Belly is an poncho is just P200. I am eagerly awaiting the arriv mail brownbelly@gmail.com or visit www.pbase.co

LAST year she knit our Christmas with handpainted necklaces. This year, a lot of other things. Ana Villalon's BohemiAna line is only beginning but you will love love love. You start with a basic bag and [illegible] useful accessories, from pens and [illegible] little notebooks to [illegible] and coin purses. There are big bags, laptop bags, belt bags—the possibilities are endless. Call Ana at 0918-901[illegible]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



I AM an advocate of scrapbook-making. I believe everyone should try it—if not for oneself, for someone else. Give the gift of creativity this Christmas by presenting a loved one with a scrapbook-making kit. Get a basic scrapbook (now available in different sizes) and throw in some colored pens, glue, glitter, beads, ribbons and other accessories. You can buy these things from National Book Store branches nationwide.

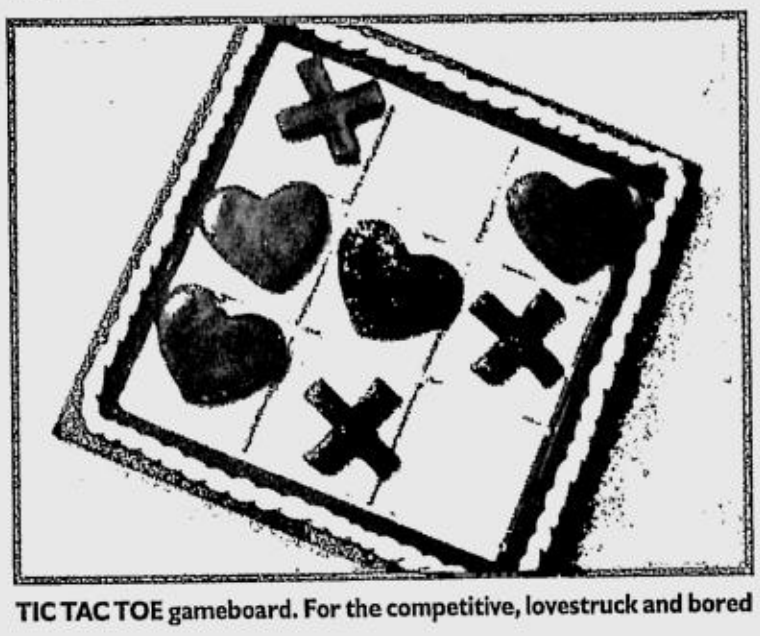


children's books that can be customized by
d family in the story. Their special Christmas
nes with a real teddy bear (because a teddy
hange the name of the lead character to the
er. Call 0917-8114649 or e-mail

CDN Kids Rule#1: Real fun starts with real friends.

CANADIAN CLUB
CLASSIC SPORTS
PLAYER
ALL STARS DIVISION

CDN KIDS
CANADIAN CLUB
Denim Rules FOR KIDZ



TIC TAC TOE gameboard. For the competitive, lovestruck and bored

CHOCOLATES. These are yummy mood-uppers for lovers and the loveless alike.

BOX of love thoughts. A love quote a day keeps your heart merry and gay.

Romance in the nippy air

STUFFED TOY. Because hugging is therapeutic, especially when The One is out of hugging reach.

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

For hopeless romantics, Christmas time is just like Valentine's—a time for sharing, expressing and some good old lovin'. So have an early Valentine's this Christmas with these lovable gift items

JEWELRY. Flashy, special and precious, of course—like your love.

MESSAGE in a bottle. What could be more romantic in a grand, old-fashioned way?

Have a pair-fect Christmas!

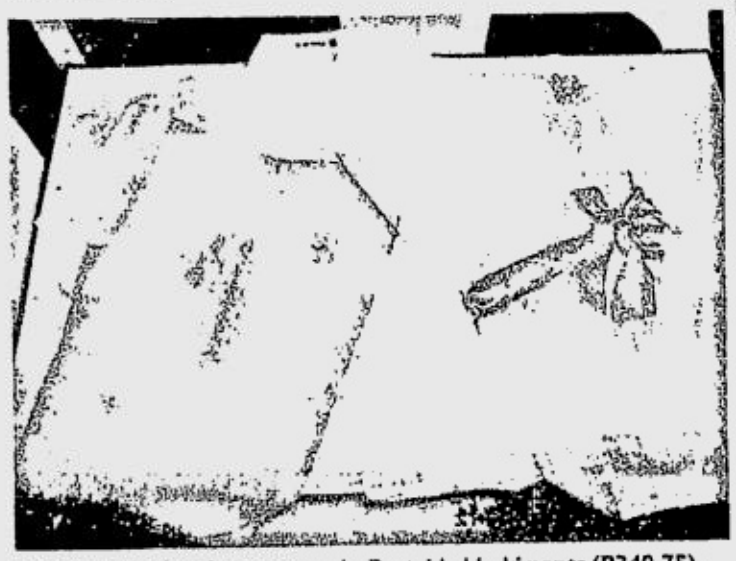
GOOD boy, bad girl. Liberte jean jacket (P399.75), red and pink tank tops (P69.75 each), flirty white skirt (P349.75); Portside red preppy shirt (P199.75), straight-cut jeans (P449.75), trucker caps (P119.75 each)

PICNIC lunch date. Portside apple green shirt (P299.75) and white cotton shorts (P89.75), Liberte white cap-sleeved shirt (P99.75) and plaid pleated mini (P299.75)

Text and photos by Marla Miniano
2bU! Correspondent

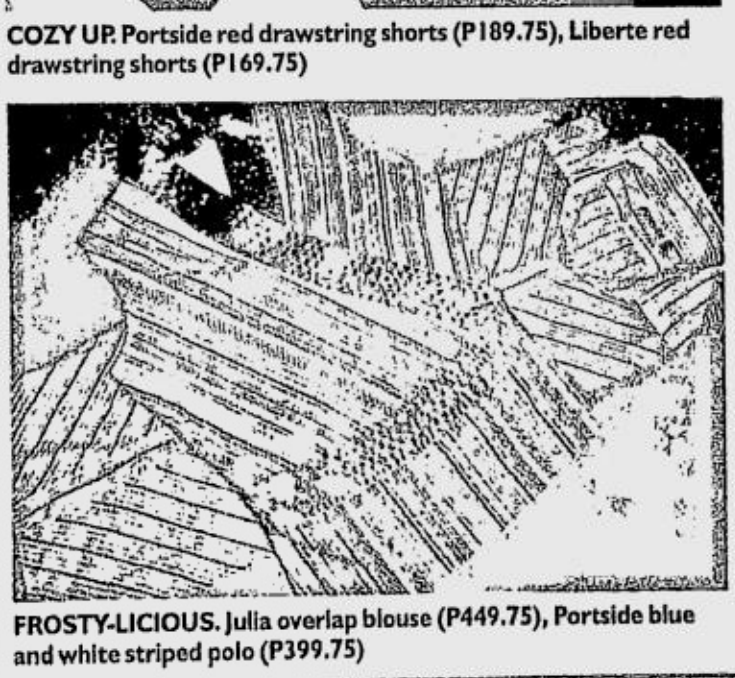
The couples in your life will love these matching gift sets

A.I. robot accessories (P500). These adorable creatures come in cool gift boxes. For orders, call 8997414 or e-mail irenepineda@artmixroom.com.

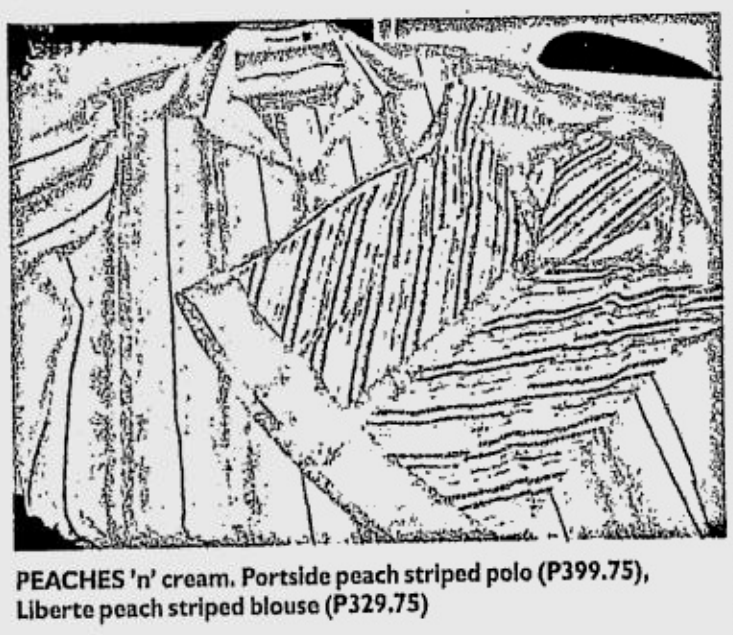


BUBBLEGUM and cotton candy. Portside khaki pants (P349.75), Portside powder-blue polo (P399.75), Julia pink strapless dress (P449.75)

COZY UP. Portside red drawstring shorts (P189.75), Liberte red drawstring shorts (P169.75)



FROSTY-LICIOUS. Julia overlap blouse (P449.75), Portside blue and white striped polo (P399.75)



PEACHES 'n' cream. Portside peach striped polo (P399.75), Liberte peach striped blouse (P329.75)

Presents for people we love to hate

By Lisa M. Sobreviñas
and Mike C. Robles
2bU! Correspondents

IT'S easy to think of gifts for people we care for. But we seldom think of giving something to people who annoy us or make us sad or crazy. Here are some things we could get for those folks who get on our nerves without even trying.

For conceited people: a heliocentric diagram, complete with a scientific explanation that the sun is the center of the solar system, not him/her

For people who think they are the world's best employee: a new boss, Donald Trump

For people who think they're not capable of finding and keeping a job: the complete DVD set of "A Simple Life" (Seasons 1 and 2). Paris and Nicole will surely lift your self-esteem and hopes!

For Eddie Gil: a hair transplant so he can get rid of his hideous wigs.

For Erap: Bob Ong's Tagalog Novel, "A B N K K B S N P L A Ko!"

For the Viva Hot Babes, Sex Bomb dancers and the like: a good education to keep them busy, so they'd have less time baring their skin and gyrating indecently in public.

For all corrupt military and government officials: a DVD of the independent flick, "The Anarchist Cookbook."

For our traffic officers: a lifetime supply of face masks (or gas masks, if the government's budget can miraculously afford them). Also, a taebo instructional video so they can lose weight.

For people who answer calls and text inside the church, especially when Mass is ongoing: a cell phone that begs to be shut off as soon as Mass begins. Or a phone that shuts off automatically when it senses that the person holding it is 5 meters away from church. Or better yet, a conscience.

For people with funny-sounding names: permission to change their names legally so they may be spared ridicule.

For people who cheat on you: a CD with Led Zeppelin's "Your Time's Gonna Come" repeating itself ad infinitum until all the 80 minutes run out.

For people who practice yellow journalism: a lifetime subscription to Time magazine and, of course, the Philippine Daily INQUIRER.

For Kuya Germs and the cast and crew of "Master Showman": Valium. Go to bed, people. *Mayroong tulugan!* It is the way of things.

For people who always say "Let's go out and have coffee" or "Let's do lunch!" but never follow up: an organizer or a 2005 planner.

For people who borrow your car and return it with an empty gas tank: fuel-efficient vehicles like owner-type jeeps and other diesel engine vehicles.

For indecisive people: a Magic 8 Ball

For people who drink milk straight from the carton: We will raid your refrigerators at midnight and replace the 1-liter milk cartons with milk in tetrapaks and straw!

For people who think they are cool but are actually borderline *baduy*: a full-length mirror and good fashion sense

For people hung up on people who don't like them: the good sense to move on

For people who think they know everything: all volumes of the "Dummy's Guide To" Series

For people who sneeze without covering their mouths: analgesic. An entire *balikbayan* box full of it.

For people who always, always ask, "*Patext, pwede?*" or "*Pwedeng makitawag?*": A Sun Cellular prepaid card, never mind if it's hard to call at night

For people who swear they love you, yet leave you without warning or explanation: forgiveness and sincere best wishes. Life is too short to be sad and bitter!

For people who watch movies they've already seen and then ruin it for everyone else by doing a blow-by-blow commentary: pens and Post-Its. Write the message instead of saying it for all to hear, okay?

For people who don't use the overpass and instead choose to risk their lives by crossing the highway: a neon jacket (especially useful at night!)

For cynical, depressed and extremely negative people: the Good Book. Or Bo Sanchez's books. If all else fails, incarceration in isolation so they cannot influence others who still have the zest to keep on living, loving and learning!

WHATTAMOUTH 2BU!'S CHOICE AWARD

Help create the world's biggest photo mosaic!

EARLY this year, thousands of people puckered their lips and helped the country bag the Guinness World Record for most number of couples kissing simultaneously.

This time, Close-Up gives you another chance to become part of a world record. And there will be no kissing involved (unless you want to, of course). In January next year, Close-Up will attempt to break the record for the Largest Photo Mosaic. And because it'll be using 200,000 pictures to achieve that, it needs your photos.

Yes, your photos.

And since this is such a fun project, 2bU! decided to join in on the excitement by helping Close-Up collect your fab photos.

We want you to send us photos of your "great mouth moments." It can be funny, silly photos of you, your friends and your family. Get creative, have fun.

And to thank you for your efforts, the entries that will qualify will automatically be included in Close-Up's Largest Mosaic.

Eight weekly winners will also be chosen starting today until Jan. 7, 2005. Weekly winners will bring home a gift pack from Close-Up, a Canon Pixma IP1000 Printer and a pair of Converse Chuck Taylors or Converse Gift Certificates worth P2,000.

At the end of the promo, 2bU! will choose a grand prize winner from the eight weekly winners and that lucky reader will be awarded a Canon Powershot A400 digital camera and P5,000 worth of gift certificates from Converse.

The mosaic will be unveiled nationwide on Jan. 29, 2005 and Close-Up will tell you exactly where your picture is located. All qualified entries received within the promo period will also be automatically entered in the Close-Up Whattamouth raffle draws where you can win great prizes like camera phones and P100,000. The grand prize winner will win P1,000,000.

There's no reason not to join. A camera—or even a million pesos—is just a snapshot away.

How to join:

1. In an envelope, enclose the following:

a. A photo of your great mouth moment (any colored photo—at least 3x5—which captures you enjoying life with your mouth, such as laughing, singing, eating, kissing, etc.)

b. Proof of purchase of any of the following:

five new Close-Up sachets (any flavor)

two new Close-Up 25-ml cartons (any flavor)

one new Close-Up 50-ml, 100-ml or 150-ml carton

c. Your personal details—your name, address, contact numbers, age and signature

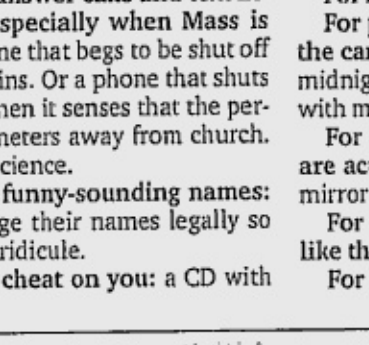
2. Outside the envelope, write the following:

a. 2bU! Whattamouth! Promo

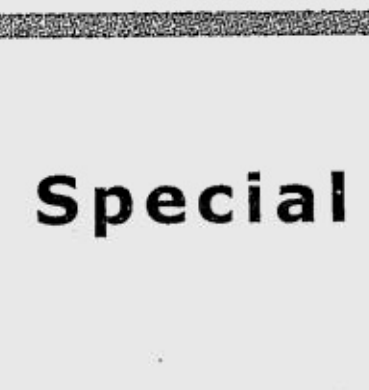
b. Your name, address and signature

3. Send entries to 2bU!, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces cor. Mascardo and Yague Sts., Makati City.

Special moments.



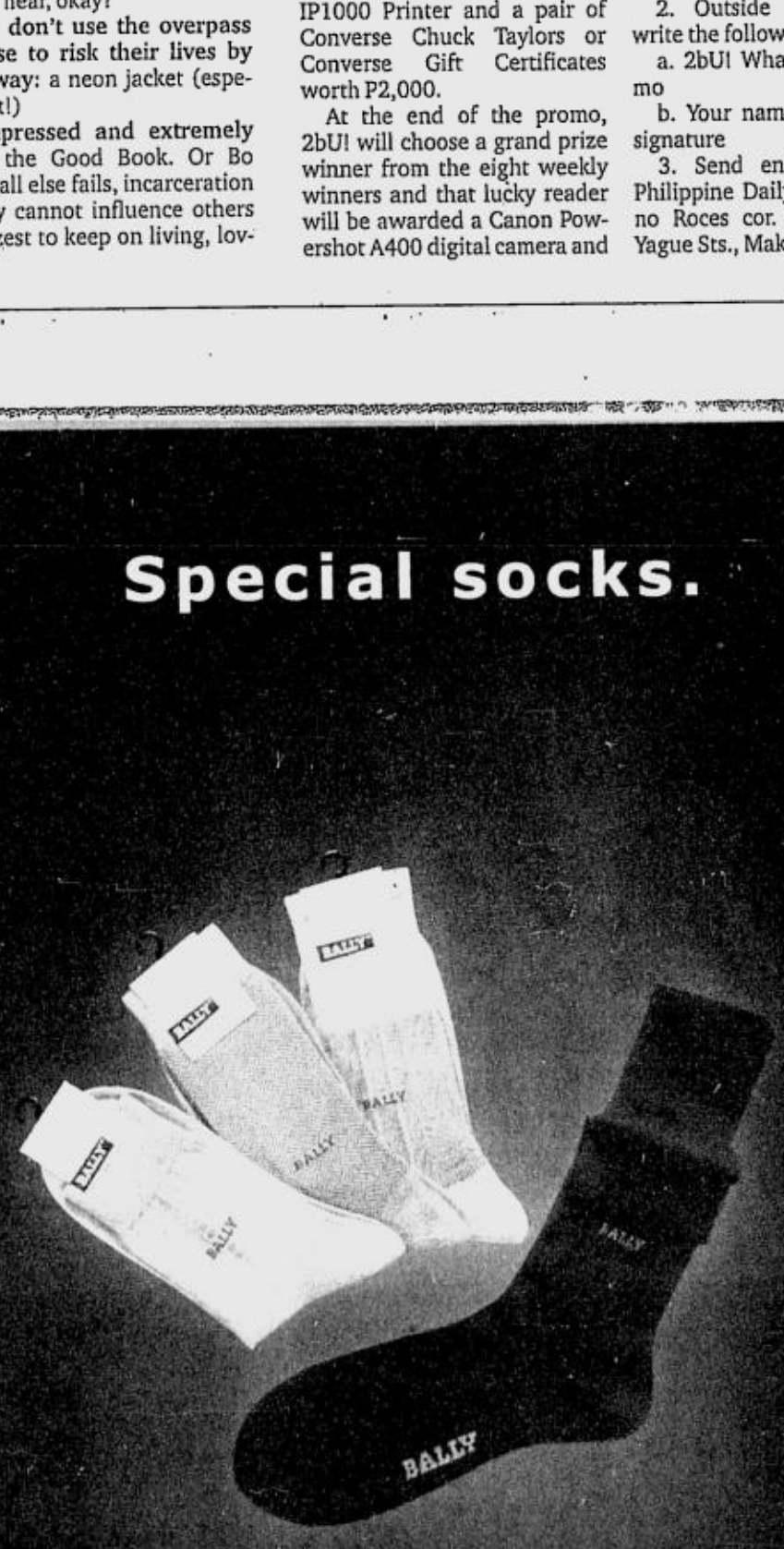
Business Meeting



Dinner Date

Weekend Get together

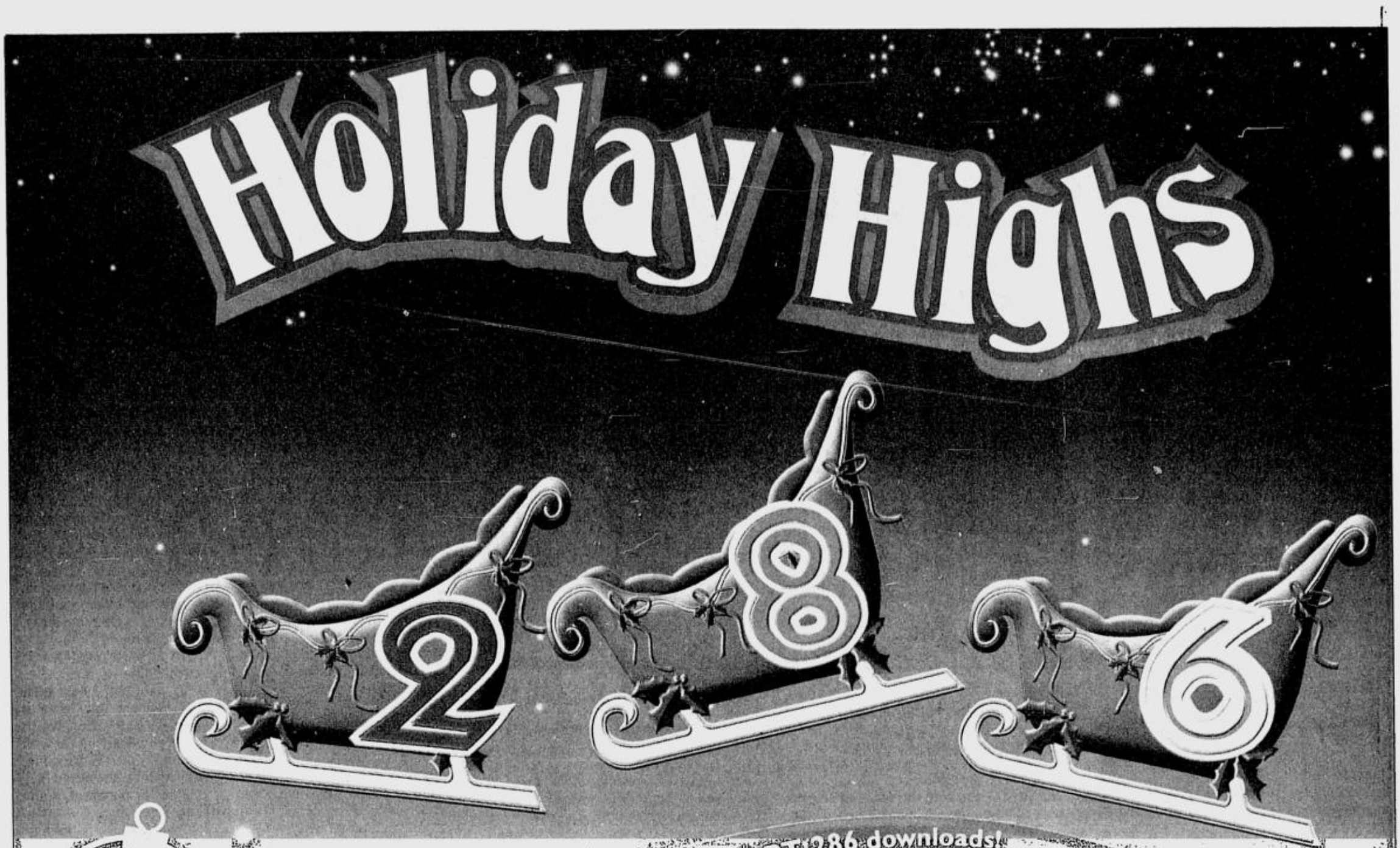
Special socks.



BALLY
DRESS SOCKS

It pays to own one.

Holiday Highs



Text PASKO to 286

Lift up your holiday mood with festive SMART 286 downloads!

GIFTune

Just text **RING GIFT <ring ID> <friend's cellphone #>** to **286**
(ex. RING GIFT 101806 09208140940)
Giftune will be charged to sender

ALL-STAR X'MAS

ARTIST	TITLE	RING ID
Mariah Carey	All I Want For Christmas Is You	101801
The Chipmunks	Jingle Bells	101803
Celine Dion	O Holy Night	101477
Wham	Last Christmas	101805
Macy Gray	Winter Wonderland	101799
Frank Sinatra	Jingle Bells	101793
Celine Dion	The Christmas Song	101478
Destiny's Child	Silent Night	101792
South Park	O Holy Night	101802
Charlotte Church	The First Noel	101790
The 3 Tenors	Joy To The World	101787
Frank Sinatra	White Christmas	101796

ALL-STAR OPM X'MAS

ARTIST	TITLE	RING ID
Artstrong*	I Saw Mommy Kissing Santa Claus	101976
Christian Bautista*	Silent Night	101977
Dice & K9*	Last Christmas	101978
Kitchie Nadal*	Merry Christmas Darling	101979
Nina*	The Christmas Song	101980
Paolo Santos*	The Man Who Would Be Santa	101981
Pido*	On Christmas Morning	101982
Thor*	This Christmas	101983
Jose Mari Chan	A Perfect Christmas	102024
Jose Mari Chan	A Wish On Christmas Night	102025
Jose Mari Chan	Christmas In Our Hearts	102027
Masculados	Lagot Ka (Feliz Navidad)	102031
Masculados	Macho Na Si Santa	102033
Parokya Ni Edgar	Happy New Year	102038
Parokya Ni Edgar	Hosana Ngayong Pasko	102039
Parokya Ni Edgar	Maybe Someday	102041
Parokya Ni Edgar	Namamasko Po	102043
Parokya Ni Edgar	Parol Ni Edgar	102044
Parokya Ni Edgar	Tamad Si Santa Claus	102047
Christian Bautista	Hark The Herald Angels Sing	101742
Christian Bautista	O Holy Night	101745
Christian Bautista	Joy To The World	101743
Christian Bautista	Silent Night	101744

YULETIDE SESSIONS

ARTIST	TITLE	RING ID
South Border	Hark The Herald Angels Sing	101778
Side A	We Wish You A Merry Christmas	101810
Mojofly	Little Drummer Boy	101747
Barbie's Cradle	Silent Night	101808
Bridge	O Holy Night 1	101840

HOHOHO

ARTIST	TITLE	RING ID
Spit	Akyat Bahay	101759
Spit	Cash Money Or Item	101760
Porkchop Duo	Aksidente	101768
Porkchop Duo	Caroling	101769
Giselle Sanchez	Bisaya Christmas	101811
Giselle Sanchez	Bluetooth	101812
JM Rodriguez	3 Itlog	101817
JM Rodriguez	Ghost Of Xmas Past (Ilonggo)	101819
Tim Tayag	Perfect Gift 1	101830
Tim Tayag	Simbang Gabi	101834

ANGELIC SOUNDS

ARTIST	TITLE	RING ID
Ateneo College Glee Club	Angels We Have Heard On High (Boombox Version)	101732
Ateneo College Glee Club	Silent Night	101737
Ateneo College Glee Club	Away In A Manger	101731
Ateneo College Glee Club	Joy To The World	101735
Ateneo Chamber Singers	Hark The Herald Angels Sing	101724
Ateneo Chamber Singers	Angels We Have Heard On High	101721
Ateneo Chamber Singers	We Wish You A Merry Christmas	101729
Ateneo Chamber Singers	God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen	101723
UP Singing Ambassadors	Angels We Have Heard On High	101740
UP Singing Ambassadors	Adeste Fidelas	101741

X'MAS

TITLE	RING ID
Happy New Year 2005 Mix	101782
Chimes Elf Mix	101781
Sleigh Bells 2 Jingle Mix	101784
Sleigh Bells Santa Mix	101783
Santa Claus	102015

CALLERTUNES

TITLE	KEYWORD
Bearyxmas	BEARYXMAS
Santagfx	SANTAGFX
Caroling	CAROLING
Snowman1	SNOWMAN1

WALLPAPERS

TITLE	KEYWORD
Sleigh	SLEIGH
Polarbr	POLARBR
Santa1	SANTA1
Santa2	SANTA2
Santa3	SANTA3
Bluexmas	BLUEXMAS
Greeting	GREETING
Mistletoe	MISTLETOE

PICTURES

TITLE	KEYWORD
Bluexmas	BLUEXMAS
Santafun	SANTAFUN
Santa	SANTA
Xmasbear	XMASBEAR

For more themes, log on to SMART Wapsite, click on AMAZING STUFF >> HANDSET THEMES.

LOGOS

TITLE	KEYWORD
3kings	3KINGS
Belen1	BELEN1
Belen2	BELEN2
Parol	PAROL
Pines	PINES
Santa6	SANTA6
Xmas1	XMAS1
Xmasgift	XMASGIFT

PICTURE MESSAGES

TITLE	KEYWORD
Belen	BELEN
Candles3	CANDLES3
Santa2	SANTA2
Xmastree	XMASTREE
Sleigh	SLEIGH
Snowman1	SNOWMAN1
Parol	PAROL
Snowman4	SNOWMAN4

MESSAGE ALERTS

TITLE	KEYWORD	TITLE	KEYWORD
Angels We Have Heard On High	ANGELS	Twelve Days Of Christmas	12DAYS
Dingdong Merrily On High	DING	We Wish You A Merry Christmas	MERRY
O Come All Ye Faithful	FAITHFUL	Chimes	CHIMES
O Little Town Of Bethlehem	LILTOWN	Happy New Year	NEWYR
O Christmas Tree	XMASTREE	Santa Claus	HOHOHO

***For WAV compatible phones only**
Including Nokia: 7610, 7650, 6600, 3650
Sony Ericsson: P800, P900 & SMART Amazing Phone

RINGTONES

TITLE	KEYWORD
Twelve Days Of Christmas	12DAYS
Jingle Bells	JINGLE
Deck The Halls	DECK
We Wish You A Merry Christmas	MERRY
Angels We Have Heard On High	ANGELS

MMS / Screensavers / Logos / Pics / Ringtones / Message Alerts - P15
Caller Ringtunes: *WARNER ALL-STAR OPM X'MAS - P45
Other ALL-STAR OPM X'MAS RINGTUNES - P30
ALL-STAR X'MAS - P45; all others - P30
All Caller Ringtunes valid for 60 days.
IVR rate - appropriate airtime charges will apply

XMAS CALENDAR LOGO

Subscribe and receive daily Xmas Calendar logos, Text **PASKO ON** to **286.**
P2.50/day

SMART Ringsuno

TO GET A CALLERTUNE: RING ADD 101801 Text RING ADD <Ring ID> Send to 286

Listen b4 u download! Just dial 1513 to access the Interactive Voice Recording feature.

I ♥ SMART Simply Amazing!

Powered by: WOLFPAC STOP PIRACY

For questions, comments or concerns, you may call SMART Hotline at 888-1111, call *888 from your cellphone (toll-free), send a text message to 888 (P1.00 per message sent in excess of the FREE TEXT allocation), e-mail us at customercare@smart.com.ph, or visit the SMART Wireless Center nearest you.

Available on brands under the SMART Network: Infinity, SMART Gold, SMART Buddy, Addict Mobile, Talk 'N Text

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2004

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

2bU! to be young • to be you • to be bold

LIFESTYLE

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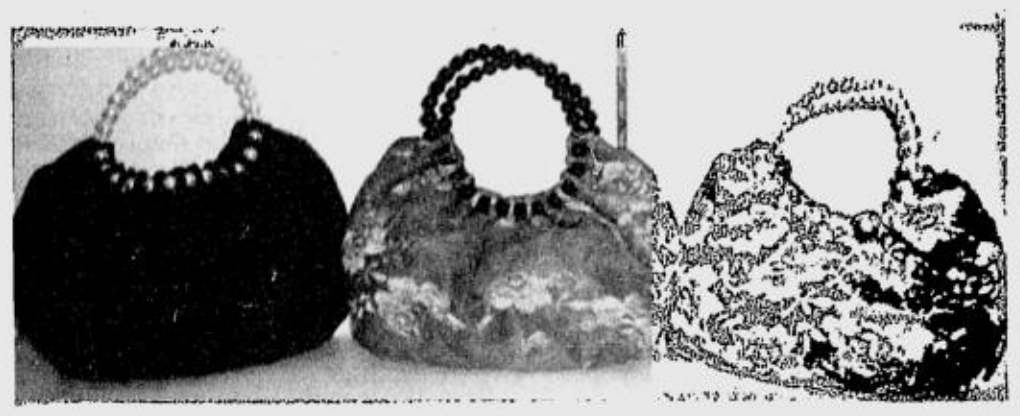
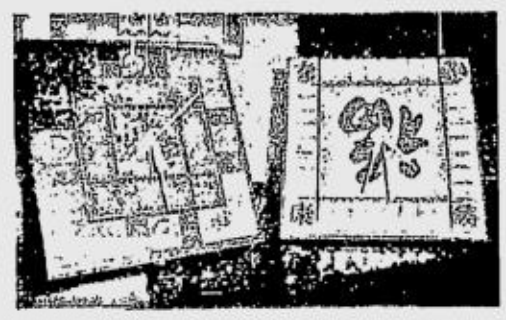
Leather wallets
Every time I walk into Marion Godart, I always get fixated with these wallets. With their personalized vintage chic designs, they give plain leather wallets a funky twist that spells c-l-a-s-s. (P1,350, Marion Godart, Independent Lifestyles, Power Plant Mall)

PHOTOS BY CHERYL TIU



Lace Bags
These purses are compact yet spacious enough to carry your valuables. Their lace design and beaded handles are Victorian-reminiscent and make a gorgeous display on your wrist. (P1,350, Marion Godart, Independent Lifestyles, Power Plant Mall)



Oriental side-table clocks
Apart from telling time, these timepieces bring in flavors of the Orient to your home. (P950, Home and Beyond, Power Plant Mall)

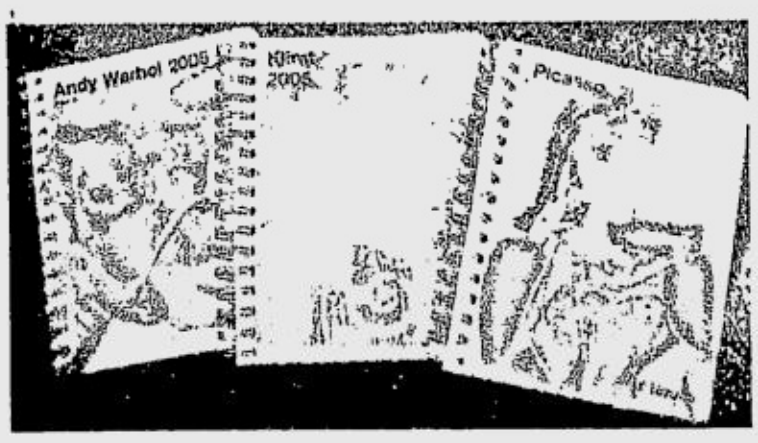
Coffee, tea and mug
Perfect for those who need to be pampered on those groggy kitchen table mornings: the Moroccan mint is soothing to the senses, the house blend reeks only of 100-percent Arabica quality coffee and the mug is there to make the experience even more rejuvenating. (Moroccan Mint Tea, P399 for 3.5 oz; house blend; and coffee mug available at Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf at Greenbelt 3, Eastwood City Walk, Alabang Town Center, Gateway Mall, Tomas Morato)

10 FUNKY/ E2

10 funky finds

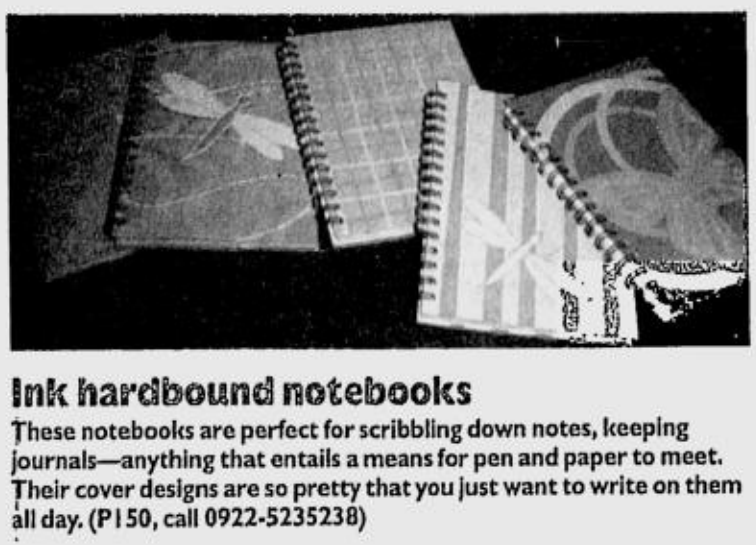
Compiled by Cheryl Tiu, *2bU! Correspondent*

Take your pick of funky notebooks, gorgeous bags, arresting wall clocks and wallets in psychedelic colors



Te Neues planners
Apart from helping me keep track of my crazy schedule, these hardbound planners showcase picturesque collections from some of the world's most brilliant artists. The years 2002 and 2003 had me strapped to Andy Warhol, 2004 was my prime with my favorite painter Gustav Klimt and I've already reserved the whole year of 2005 for Pablo Picasso. (P699, on a 30-percent discount this December, Fully Booked, Power Plant Mall)

Wine bottle accessories
My friend got me one of these cheongsam bottle dresses as a *pasalubong* from Singapore. Their delicate Oriental piping and trimmings can adorn your tables while redefining the purpose of an old discarded bottle. (P195, Home and Beyond, Power Plant Mall)



Ink hardbound notebooks
These notebooks are perfect for scribbling down notes, keeping journals—anything that entails a means for pen and paper to meet. Their cover designs are so pretty that you just want to write on them all day. (P150, call 0922-5235238)

cheap/chic

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Now : P14,315.00

A01-03-08-13B1 Entertainment Center*
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TARGET Dining Set for 4
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From me to me

Text and photos by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

REWARDING yourself for a job well done is not being self-indulgent. After all, you give to everyone else, from mom and dad to *kuya*, *ate*, friends, batchmates, officemates, even the guards, *basureros* and utility men in your village.

So here are great enticements, from cheap thrills to splurges, that you can gift yourself with.

A BLACK shirt made funky with fabric flowers and 2bU! logo in sequins, The Store With No Name

Personalized clothing

Set yourself apart from everyone else with a personalized item, such as a jacket, shirt or bag. Have your name or personal statement emblazoned in sequins, beads or fabric paint. The Store With No Name in Robinson's Galleria has in-house stylists who can help liven up that plain white shirt. If you'd rather do it yourself, they also have personalizing kits that contain sequin brooches, beads, needles and thread.

Shu Uemura Oriental Glow makeup palette

With four eyeshadows (pearl pink, pearl blue, metallic gold and iridescent blue), peachy-orange blush and colorless compact powder, the Oriental Glow palette is the must-have makeup for the holidays. Still thinking it over? Two words: limited edition.

Tickets

Christmastime brings all the good shows to town. Splurge on a couple of tickets to the ballet, a concert or a play. The CCP always has great shows at this time of year. There's nothing like a concert to get you into the Yuletide mood. If you want to be a kid for a day, check out "Disney on Ice" at the Araneta Coliseum, or everyone's favorite mainstay, Enchanted Kingdom.

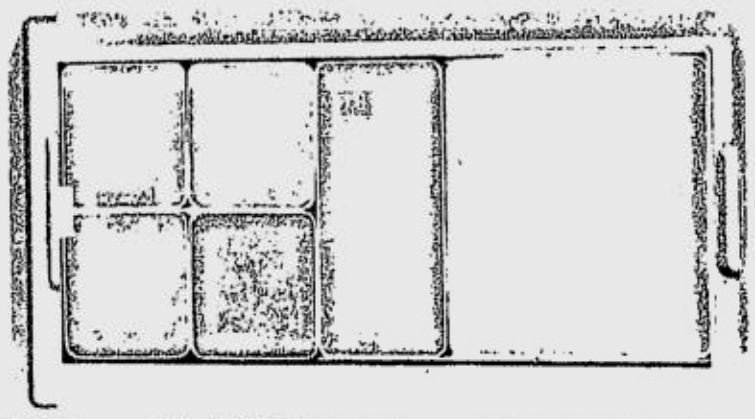
Swatch Bunnysutra watch

Swatch watches have always been great gifts because they're cute, practical and wholesome. Well, not anymore. While the rainbow-drenched Flik Flak line is a bestseller, the Bunnysutra watch is interesting because of the detail—the face is decorated with cute little pink bunnies... uh, doing what makes rabbits multiply so quickly.

5. A gorgeous party dress

Dress for the holidays and put off those jeans and tank tops for summer. Splurge on a beautiful party dress that'll make everyone's jaw drop. This confidence booster is one of the best gifts you can give yourself.

SILVERY-GRAY cocktail dress, P2,995, Karimadon



SHU Uemura Oriental Glow palette

THINK of it as a great conversation piece: the Swatch Bunnysutra

ENCHANTED Kingdom tickets

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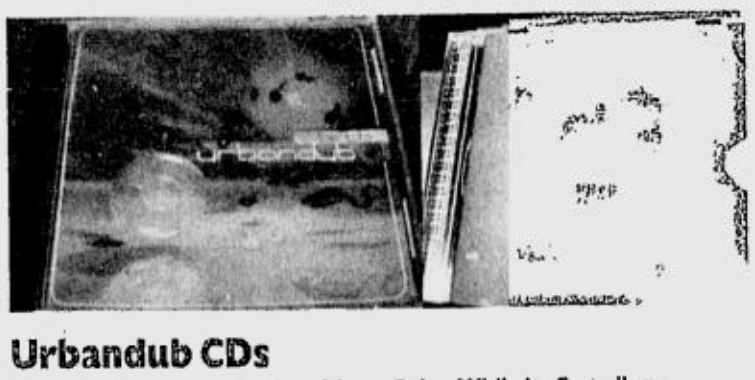
10 funky finds

From page E1

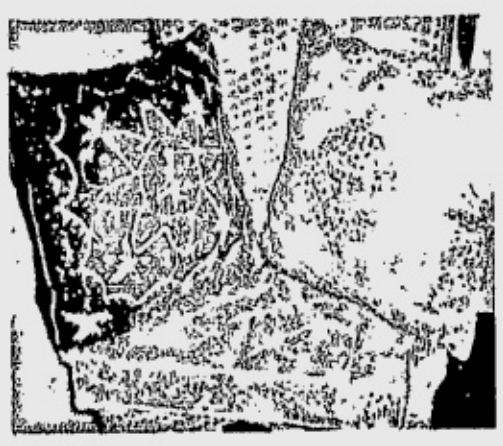
Travel guides

Lonely Planet and DK Eyewitness Travel Guide were my best friends and perennial mentors when I was living in Europe. It's not necessary to pay much for a city tour when these books are there to help you up your historical IQ and swim in a new, foreign culture—all at your own pace. These are some of the best investments when going on a trip. ("Lonely Planet," P714-P1,400, "DK Eyewitness Travel Guides" P899-P1394, Fully Booked, Power Plant Mall)



Urbandub CDs

Urbandub is an amazing band from Cebu. While its first album, "Birth," spanned the powerful singles "Come" and "It's Over", the second album, "Influence," was crowned "Album of the Year" at the 2004 NU 107 Rock Awards. (P250, Music Video, Power Plant Mall)



Thai pillow cases

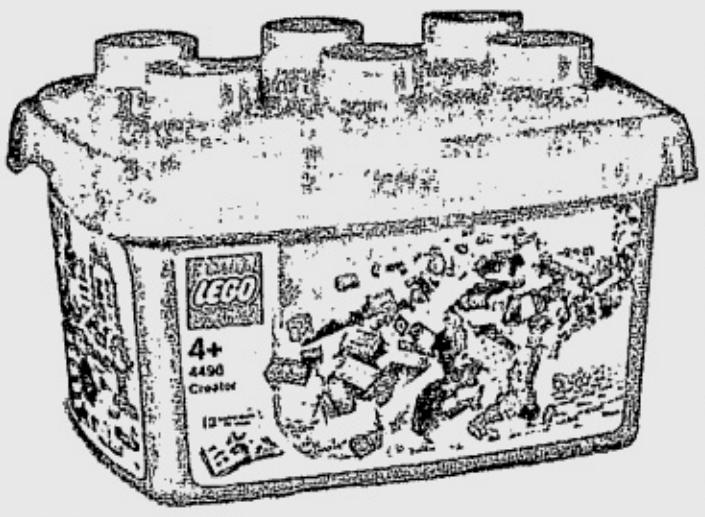
Thai interiors are some of the prettiest in the world. Dressing your pillows with these pillowcases are enough to throw in palettes of exotic color into your home without having to splurge on a full-scale renovation. (P590-P690, Nullah, Independent Lifestyles, at Power Plant Mall)

PHOTOS BY CHERYL TIU

TOM (CAT) EXPANDABLE PAPER HAT

It's a hat, it's a cat and... um, it's made of paper. This gift is perfect for those who wish to flaunt their 'kiddiness' while still looking trendy. Wear the hat and show everyone your love for cartoons. After all, who doesn't remember Tom and Jerry? Available at Chi Chi Rico, Market! Market!

Young at heart –for life!



LEGO

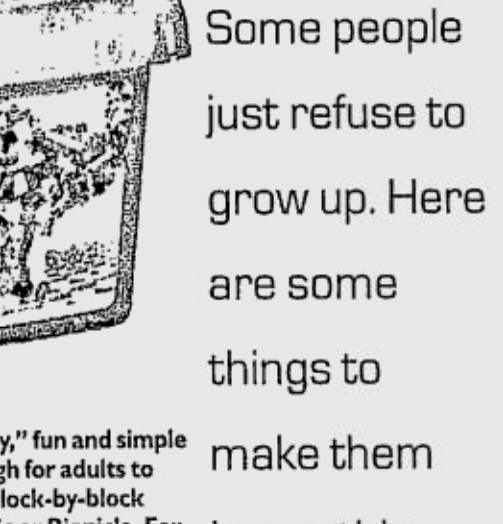
Lego has always proven to be an everlasting "toy," fun and simple enough to play as a child yet also complex enough for adults to enjoy. The best Lego product is still the classic block-by-block assemblage rather than the new-fangled Technic or Bionicle. For that extra "geeky" goodness, go for the Lego/Star Wars products. Who cares if you look childish playing with these things? They're awesome! Available at Toy Kingdom.

By Javier Mata
2bU! Correspondent

Some people just refuse to grow up. Here are some things to make them happy this season

SCOTLAND YARD GAME BOARD

Tired of playing the same old Monopoly or Snakes and Ladders? Check out Scotland Yard, a unique kind of game for the family and any party. The premise is simple: One person is Mr. X the criminal, everybody else is the police. Mr. X wins if he escapes, the police win if they catch him. What makes this game different is that it allows the smug players to test how far they can outsmart their friends. A funny game of catch-me-if-you-can, Scotland Yard can be ordered from www.uber-games.com (a local company, so there are no shipping hassles involved).



VINTAGE TOYS

Wind-up monkey shining shoe, musical boxes with dancing clowns. Kaleidoscopes from Firma, Greenbelt 3 (Call 7574009)

SPOOFS T-SHIRTS

If there's ever a quintessentially Pinoy business idea, it would have to be Spoofs Ltd, the line of shirts that spoofs famous brand logos and names and turns them into sublimely funny rip-offs. Since its inception, it has created dozens of memorable shirts: "Suotmotofre Faraguafo" (Salvatore Ferragamo), "Bolo" (Polo), "No Fera" (No Fear), "Starbuko" (Starbucks).

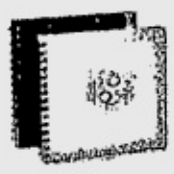
ALL ABOARD!

Monopoly Railroad Collector's Edition, P2,500, Hobbes, Greenbelt 3

merit *Christmas*
Gift suggestions

Scrapbook

Sticker Box


Diary

Buddy Bag

Butterfly Bag

Photo Box

School Tote

Midimax

Activity Fun Set

Photo Hang-Ups

Visit your favorite retailer:
· *Shoemart Department Stores - all branches*
· *Rustan's Department Store - Makati & Shangrila*
· *National Bookstore · Kid's Station · Metro Market Market*
· *Landmark Department Store*
· *Makro and other leading stores nationwide.*

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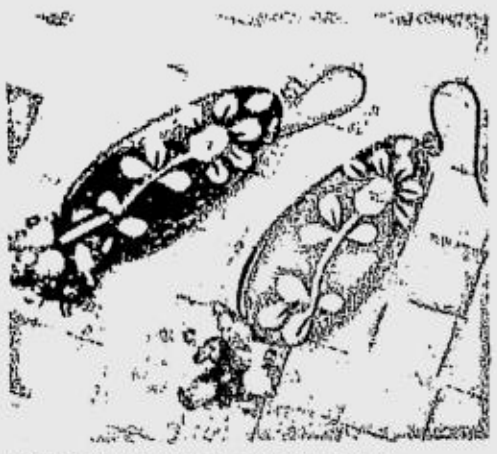
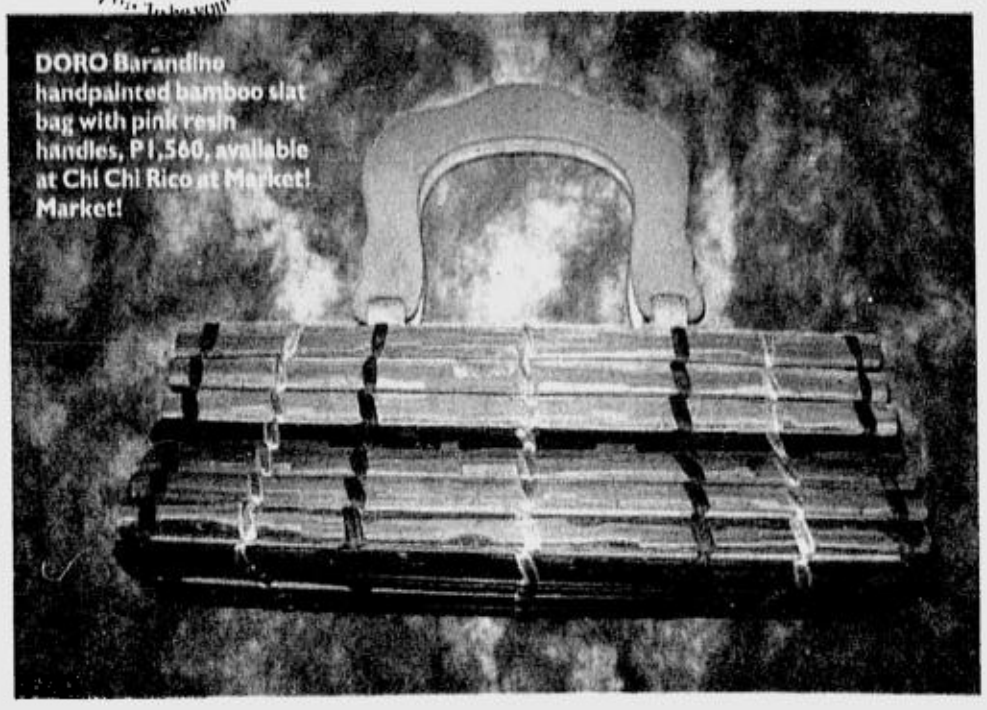
*Plus 10% Service Charge and 10.7% VAT and Gov't Tax. Subject to availability and prior confirmed reservations. Open to local residents and expatriates residing in the Philippines only; proof of residency may be required upon check-in. Package valid until January 10, 2005. Per DTI-NCR No. 6062, Series of 2004

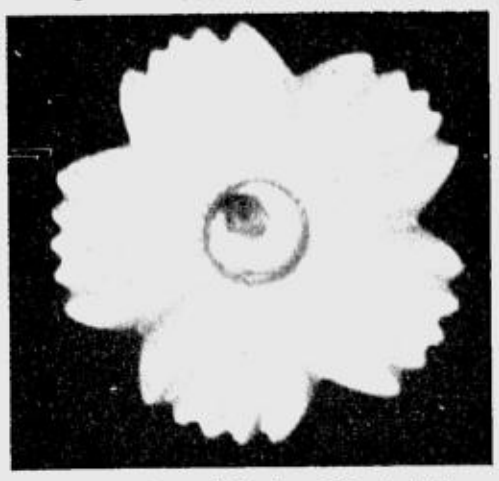


HANDPAINTED kalachuchi on resin-covered popsicle stick with bead cluster earrings, Get Happy

CHI CHI Rico tatami slippers come in plain (P220), checkered (P280) or with embroidery (P320)

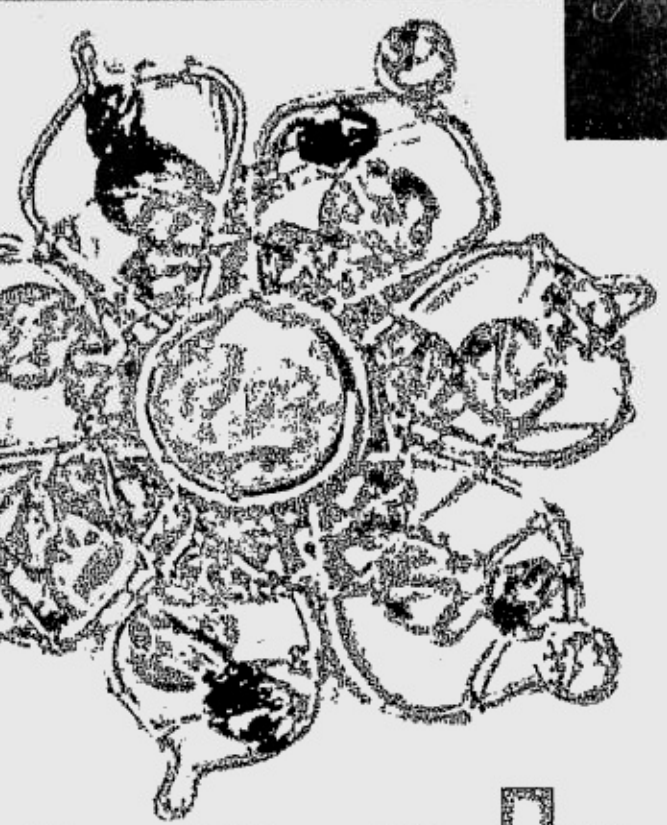


DORO Barandino handpainted bamboo slat bag with pink resin handles, P1,560, available at Chi Chi Rico at Market! Market!



FLOWER embossed Mother of Pearl shell with rhinestone pin, Get Happy

BEAD and wire brooch, P595, Get Happy



GET Happy laminated travel charm bracelet

Beach bum's stocking stuffers

Some gift ideas for the sun, sand and tan-obsessed

By Kristine Ching
2bU Correspondent

IT'S TOUGH for the beach-obsessed to be stuck in the city on Christmas. If you care about them, then be so guided when you give them gifts. Either you bring them to the beach or you bring the beach to the city.

Get them something they'll bring on their next trip. It's more practical and they would most likely use it unless they already have it.

The toiletries kit (P350 at Karl Edward Bazaar) comes with a hook so beach bums can just hang it on the bathroom wall. It saves the beach lovers' time from unpacking, which they can use for more sunbathing. Throw in some toiletries for a subtle hint that it's time to wash their dreadlocks.

Just because beach lovers like their look au naturelle doesn't mean they're not into make-up and accessories. Think: beach parties! It never hurts to have an accessory or two and body glitters. Check out Body Shop's new glitter makeup sets.

Get Happy's new line features accessories with colors reminiscent of summer. (Available at U Rustan's in Makati and Robinsons Place Ermita; XOXO Rustan's Tower Shangri-La; The Store with No Name at Robinsons Galleria; Shubizz at the Shops Greenhills and Market Market; ISHQ at Astoria Plaza; Mag:net Plus at The Loop, ABS-CBN; Paseo Center in Makati; and Katipunan)

If fashionistas can't get enough of shoes and bags, beach bums can't get enough of flip-flops. Havaianas are said to be durable, but no one's sure how they will fare in the urban jungle. Cheaper alternatives are Banana Peel (P50-100), Offshore (P100-150) and Planet (P100-150), available at SM. Offshore and Planet have summer-inspired designs, while Banana Peel has very colorful flip-flops.

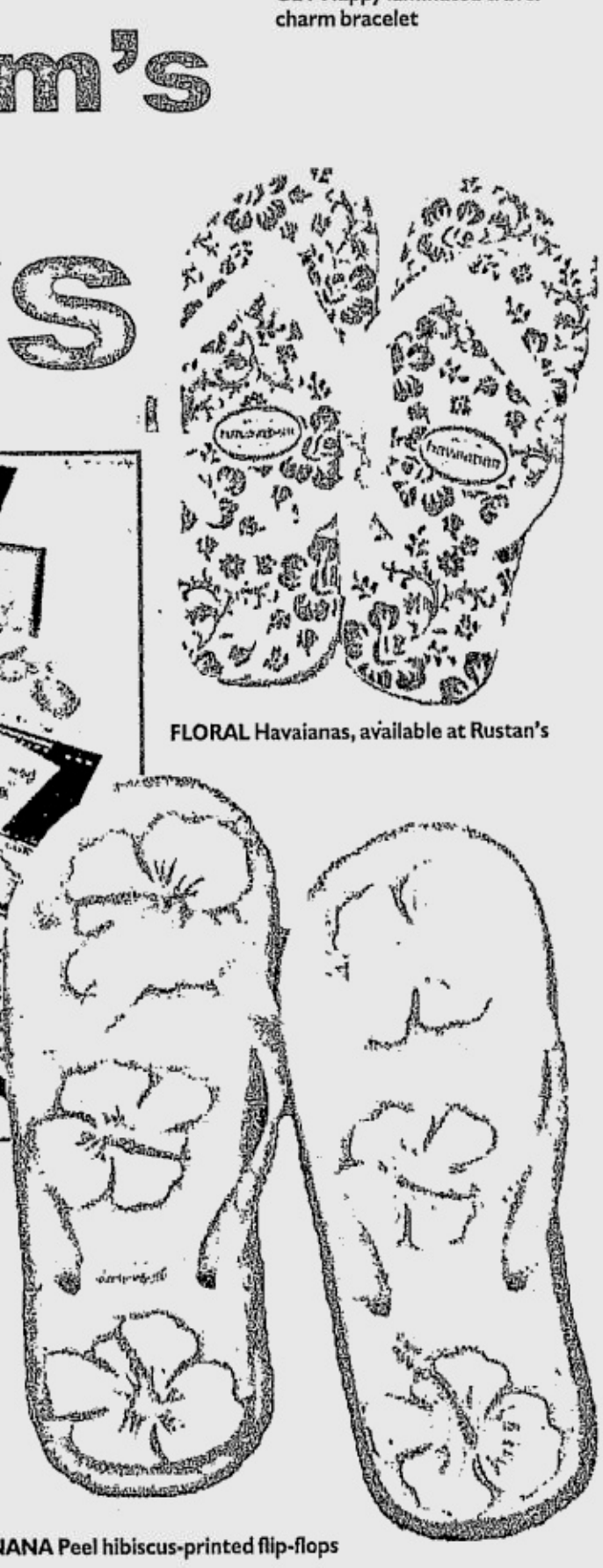
A beach fanatic may also enjoy summer-scented goods. Body Shop's Oceanus is available in different gift sets suited to one's budget. Indie Art Home Spa by Marge D. Manalaysay, available at Karl Edward Bazaar and Mag:net Plus branches, is a homegrown brand that makes soaps (P150-250), lotions, skin butter (P395), essential oils, aroma oils, massage oils (P250-400 for oils), and candles (P395). They come in exotic tropical scents like champaka, melon-papaya, mangorita, cocomangas.

TOILETRIES kit (P350, Karl Edward Bazaar at the NBC Tent, on Dec. 18-22, 9 a.m.-8 p.m.)

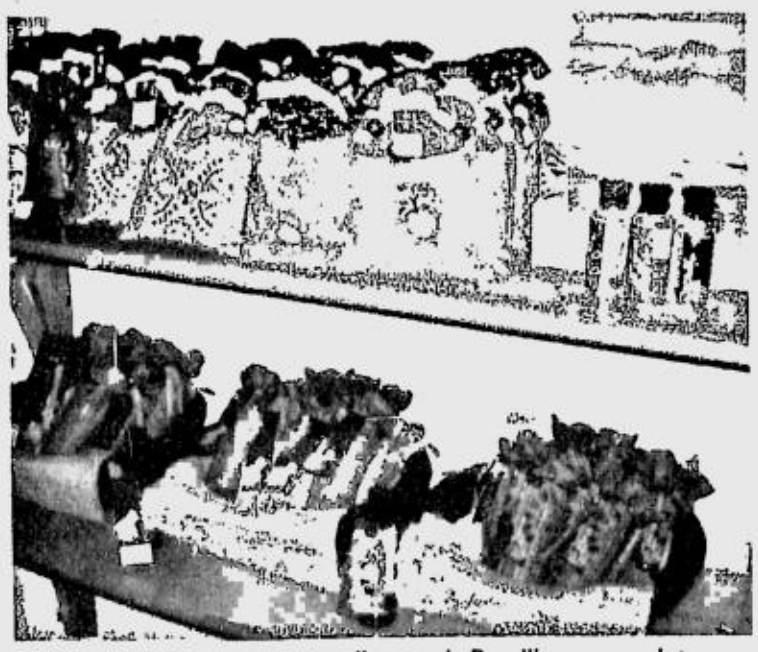
PHOTOS BY HAPPY DAVID AND KRISTINE CHING

SCENTS of the Islands bath bars, Indie Art Home Spa

FLORAL Havaianas, available at Rustan's

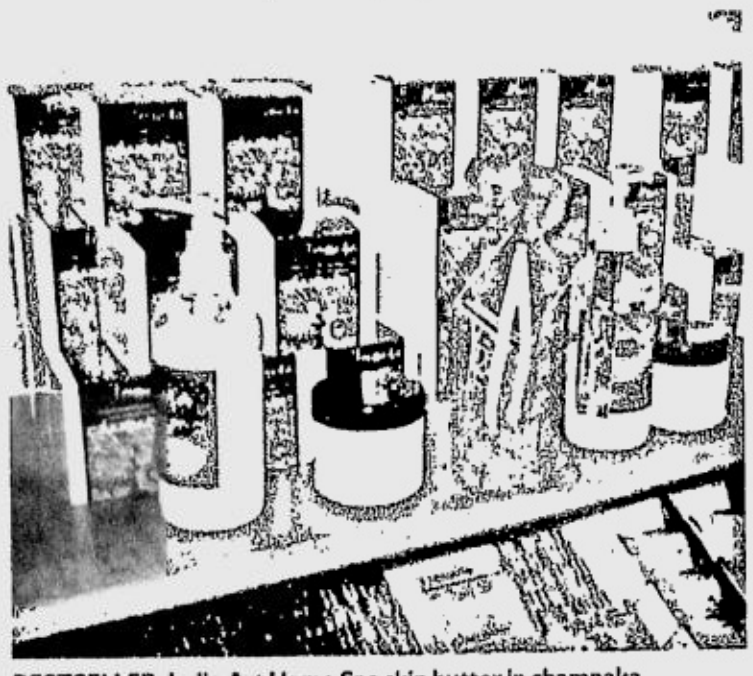


BANANA Peel hibiscus-printed flip-flops

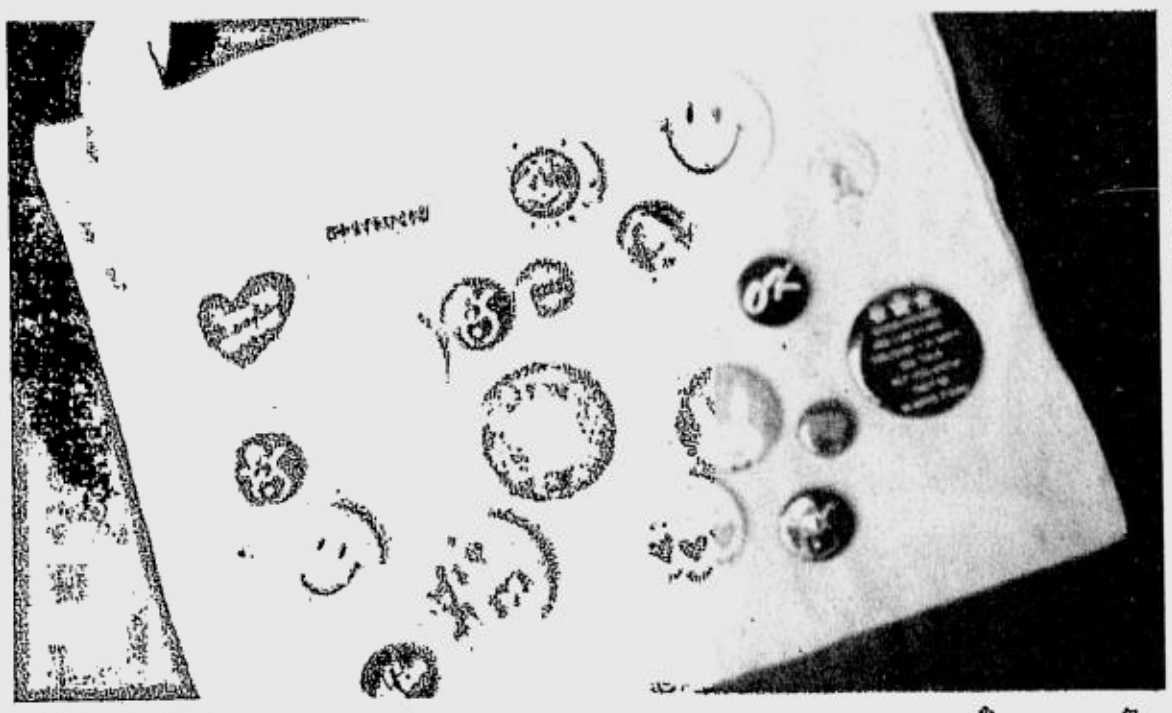


INDIE Art Home Spa massage oils come in Brazilian orange, lotus and the traditional lulur. Samplers of the three come in pretty batik pouches.

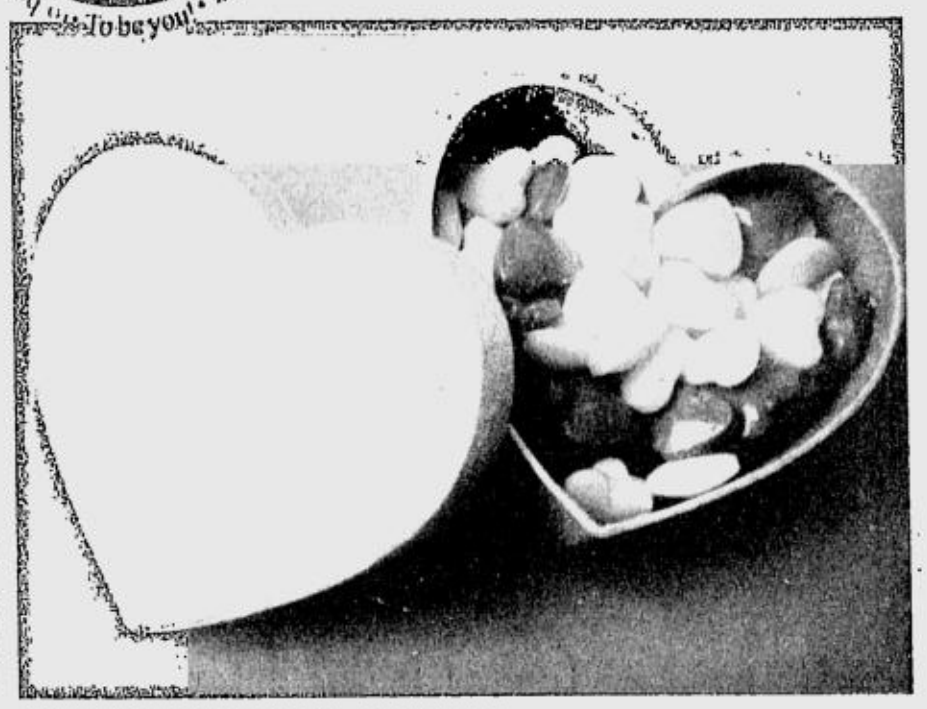
LULUR Tropics gift set with bamboo cucumber creme wash and traditional lulur oil, Indie Art Home Spa



BESTSELLER. Indie Art Home Spa skin butter in champaka, moonsummer and cocomangas, P395/bottle, P200/jar

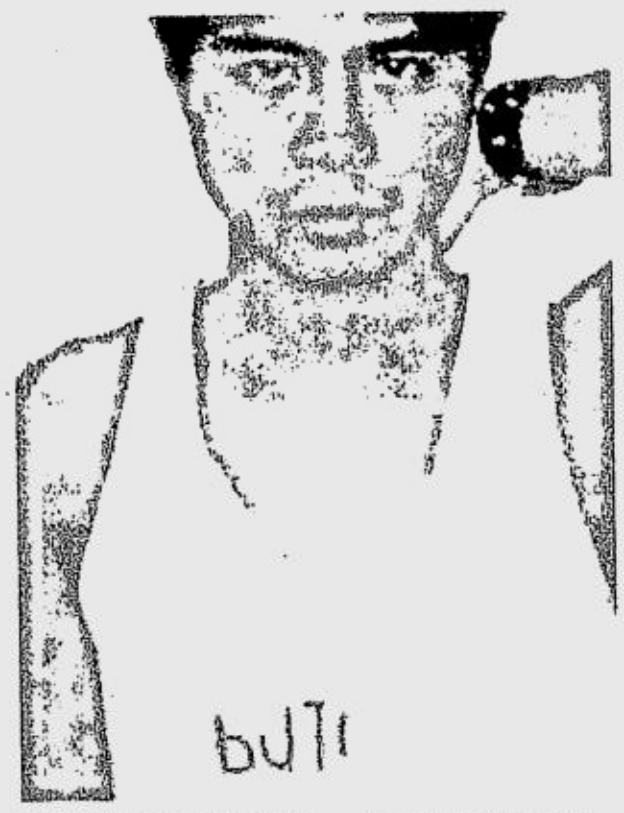


BAG with badges. Whatever bag you like, plus as many funky buttons as you can afford, equals a stylish and personalized present.



CANDIES in a container. Let them enjoy the sweets and then recycle the container.

Gifts by hand, from the heart



PERSONALIZED shirt. Make a statement using your own statements (plus some fabric paint, too).

Text and photos by Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

NOTHING can truly top a personalized present, with all the effort, time and love poured into making it.

Whether it's a culinary concoction that you yourself created or a unique keepsake that will surely pull at the heartstrings, a personalized gift holds more meaning and value, and has a smaller chance of being recycled.

It's fun to make and is usually cheaper, too.

So flex those skilled fingers and challenge those creative brain cells of yours this yuletide season. Here are some items you can enjoy making and be truly proud of giving.

LIKE A FESTIVAL OF MALLS ONLY AT
FESTIVAL SUPERMALL
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Grant-A-Wish

December 8, 2004 - January 2, 2005

Grant-A-Wish Raffle

Every purchase of P500 (single or accumulated) from any participating Festival Supermall store or restaurant from December 8, 2004 - January 2, 2005 entitles the customer to a raffle coupon at the level 2 Customer Service Counter.

Prizes
(2) Bratz Gift Sets
(2) Kiddie Mountain Bikes
(2) Barbie Gift Sets
(2) Sony Playstations
(2) Motorola C375 Phone Kits
(2) "My First Wheels" Motorbikes
(2) Ipod Mini

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A2- 580, Series of 2004.

Grant-A-Wish Charity

Every P5 donation you make entitles you to a Christmas Bell, which you can get from the Customer Service Counter. Then, hang this on our giant Christmas tree! Proceeds will go to the streetchildren of Muntinlupa City.

Call Customer Service at 850-3514 or visit website www.festivalsupermall.com

FILINVEST

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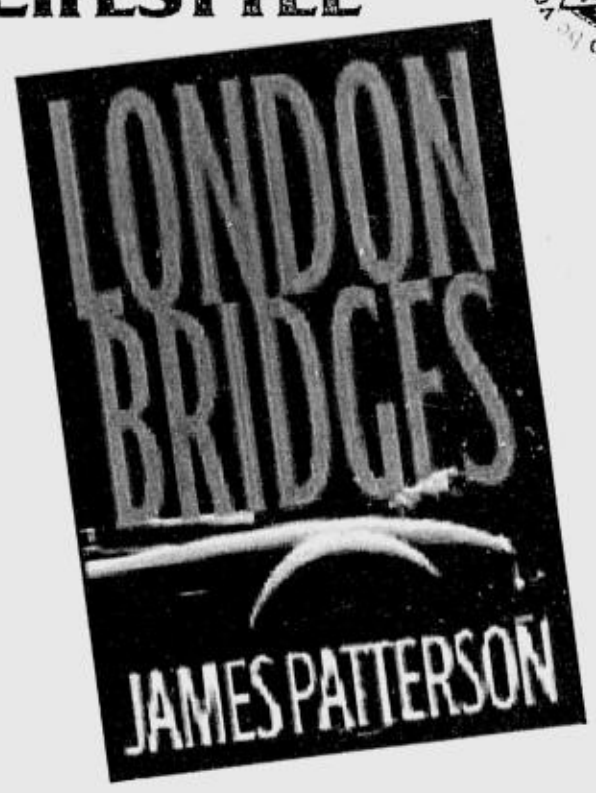
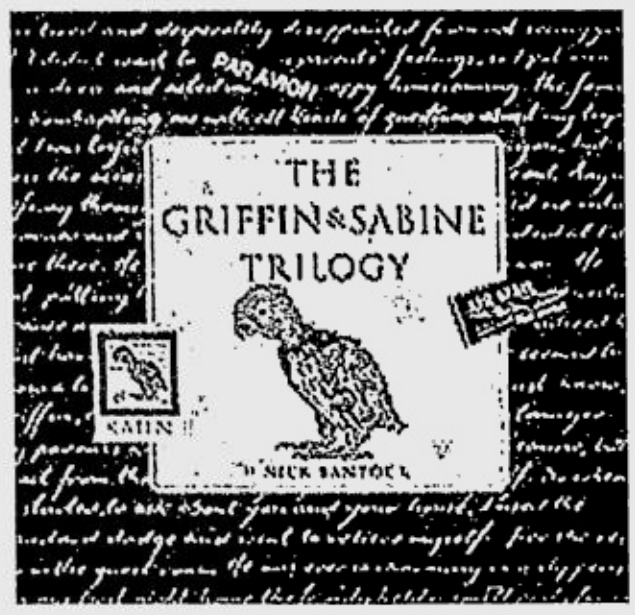
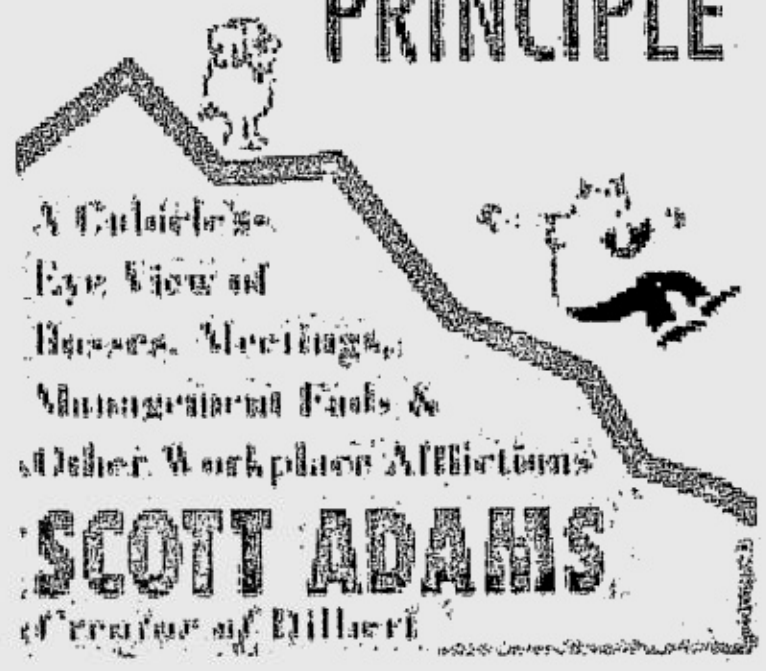




These books will make great gifts this Christmas

Holiday reads



By Javier Mata
2bU! Correspondent

'The Dilbert Principle'
By Scott Adams

A fun and often satirical look at office life. Scott Adams' comic strip Dilbert gives us a glimpse of the insanity that is the office setting, with the humor and content strikingly close to the real thing. That same humor is now in the book, "The Dilbert Principle," which makes a great gift for your hapless friends who work in the modern prison cell known as the office cubicle. Available at Power-Books.

'Griffin and Sabine Trilogy'
By Nick Bantock

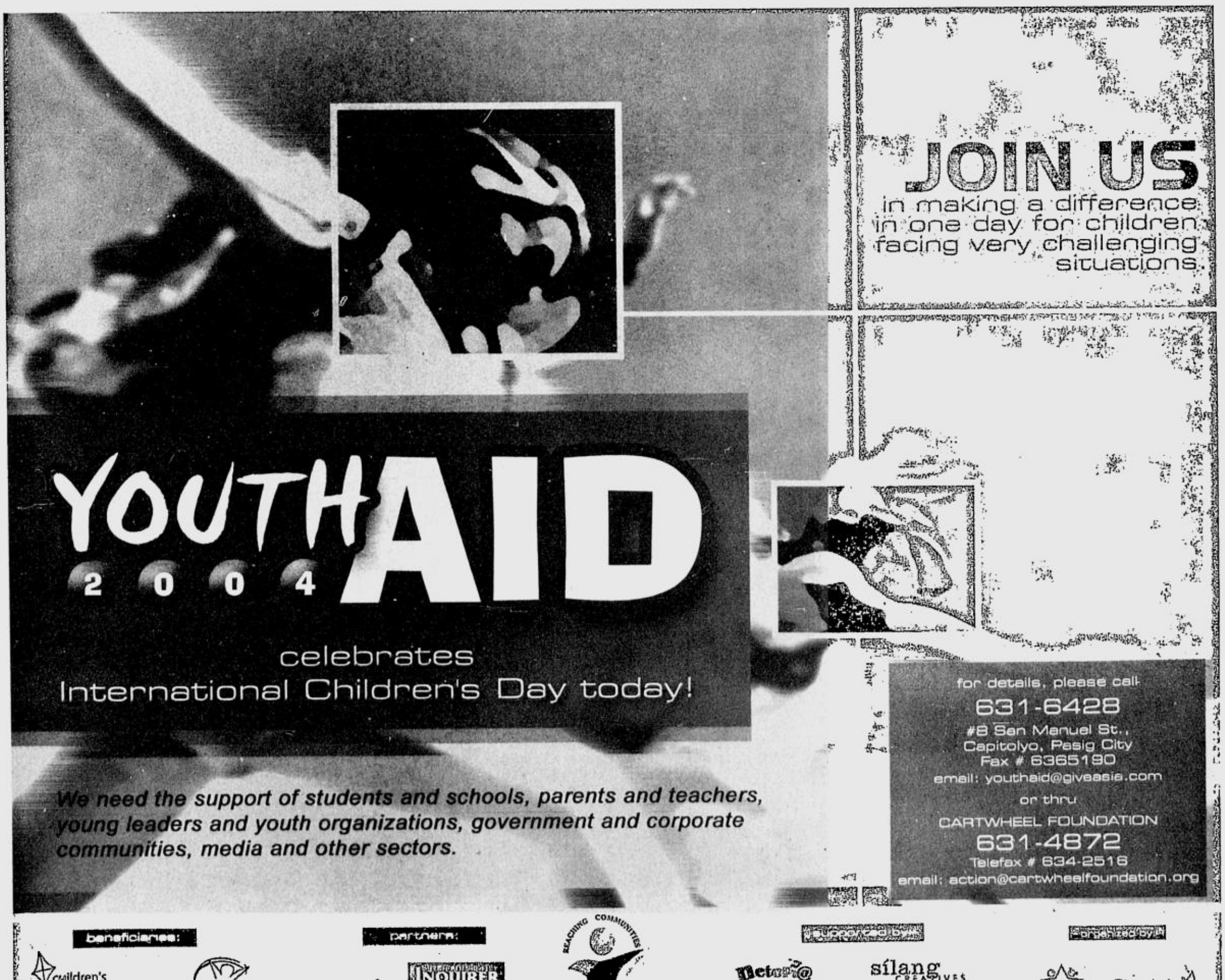
This series of books is unique in its own right. Do you get a thrill out of reading things you're not supposed to be reading? Like someone else's personal letters? Well, Nick Bantock's enchanting series gives you just that. Each "page" is actually an authentic-looking postcard or letter, complete with envelopes, stamps, return addresses, handwritten notes and even typographical "errors." The well-played out love story progresses as you read the correspondence between Griffin and Sabine, and it makes for a very alluring read. Available in Power Books.

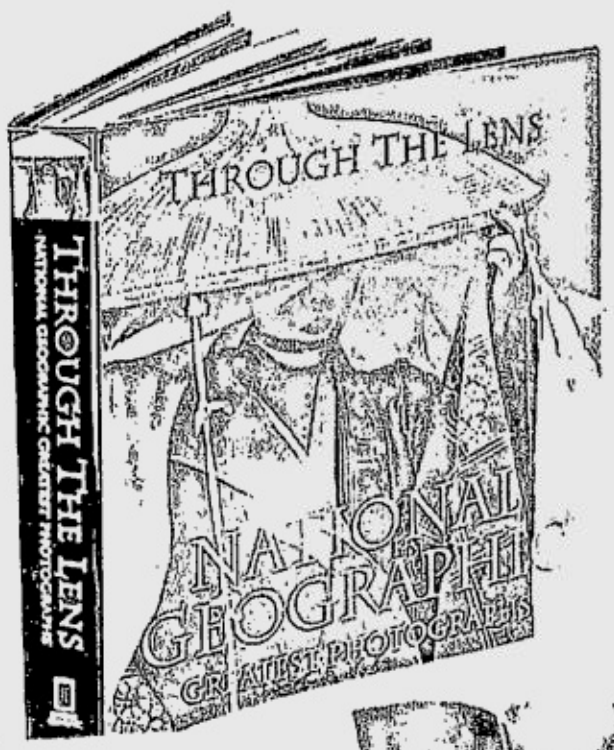
'London Bridges'
By James Patterson

Alex Cross ("Along Came a Spider," "Kiss the Girls") returns for his most explosive adventure yet. Fans of James Patterson's cunning FBI agent will find this 10th venture an exciting one. This time, Cross finds himself facing two of his most dangerous enemies: the terrorist known only as the Wolf and the assassin known only as the Weasel. Full of false leads, whodunits and other detective story staples, this book will not disappoint fans of James Patterson's stories. Available in National Book Store.

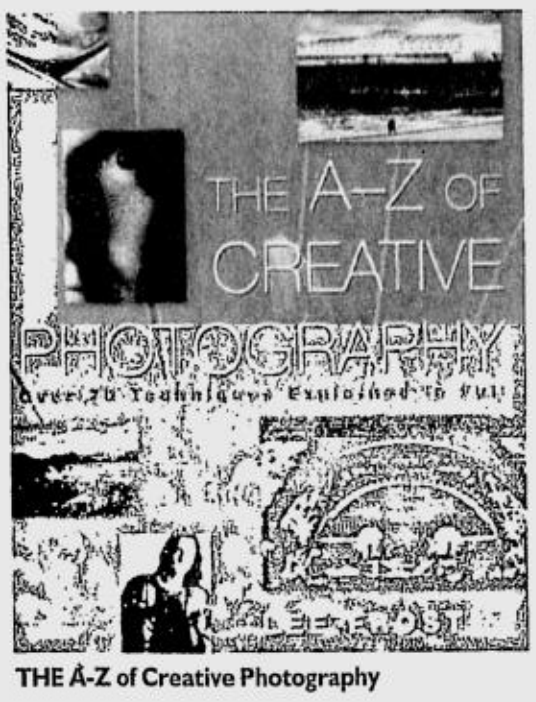
'The Judges: A Novel'
By Elie Wiesel

A suspense thriller like no other. When a plane is brought down by bad weather, five of the passengers seek refuge in the home of a mysterious man known only as the Judge. Each passenger has a story to tell, and a dark secret to hide. Things quickly become disturbing as their enigmatic host begins to interrogate them and force them to face their past and their future. Soon, he makes a horrifying announcement: One of them—the least worthy—will die. This startling novel is a must-read for the introspective reader. Available in National Book Store.

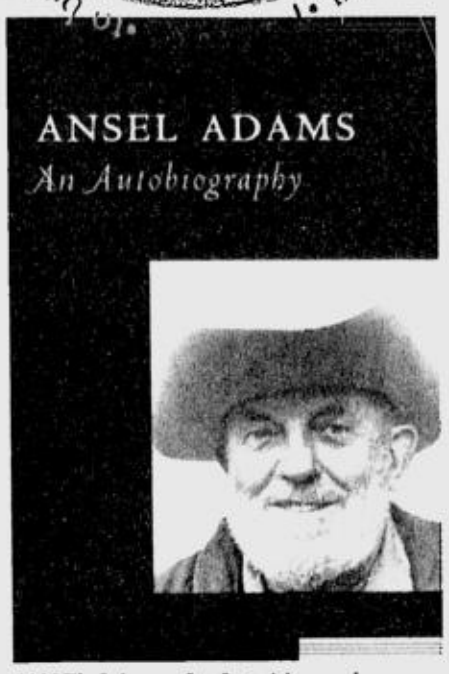




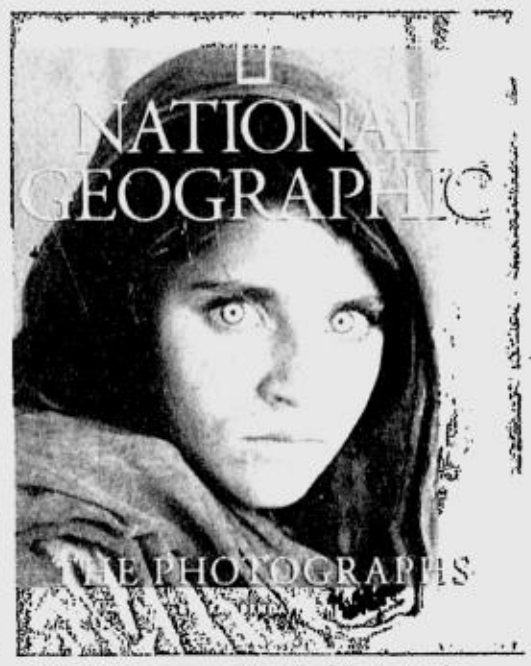
NATIONAL Geographic: Through the Lens



THE A-Z of Creative Photography



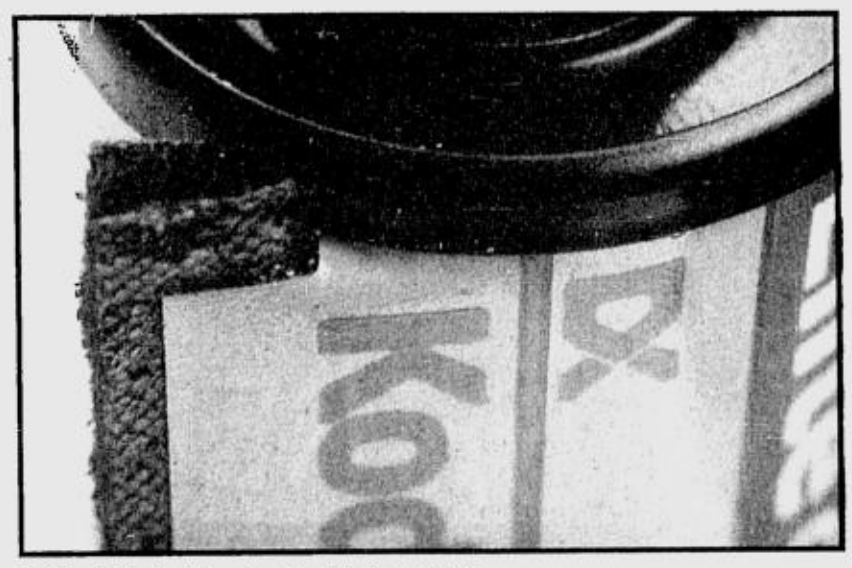
ANSEL Adams: An Autobiography



NATIONAL Geographic: The Photographs

Shopping for the shutterbug

Can't afford a digital camera for your photography-crazy loved one? Check out these more affordable but no less precious alternatives

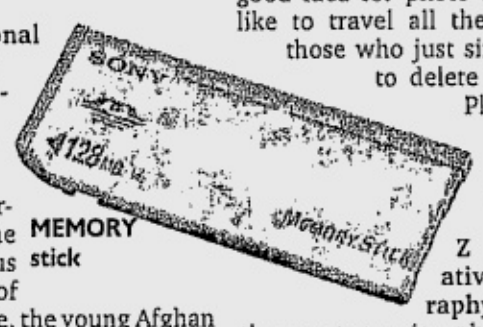


ROLL of film for the photo junkie in your life

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

IF you're thinking of a gift for someone who loves photography but you can't afford a digital camera, take heart. There are still a lot of affordable things you can get him, from collectors' items to autobiographies of famous photographers.

1. **National Geographic: The Photographs:** The cover features what is arguably the most famous photograph of the magazine, the young Afghan girl with otherworldly eyes. This collection comprises the landmark pictures that cemented National Geographic's reputation as a formidable force in world photography.



MEMORY stick

2. **National Geographic: Through the Lens:** Another popular NatGeo publication, Through the Lens features a more varied hodgepodge of photographs. Covering all subjects, from portraits to underwater pictures, this book will suit the photographer who likes to take shots of everything.

3. **In Focus: National Geographic Greatest Portraits:** I love this book, maybe because I dream of becoming a documentary photographer someday. The book itself is made up of 280 arresting images that span decades of photographic history.

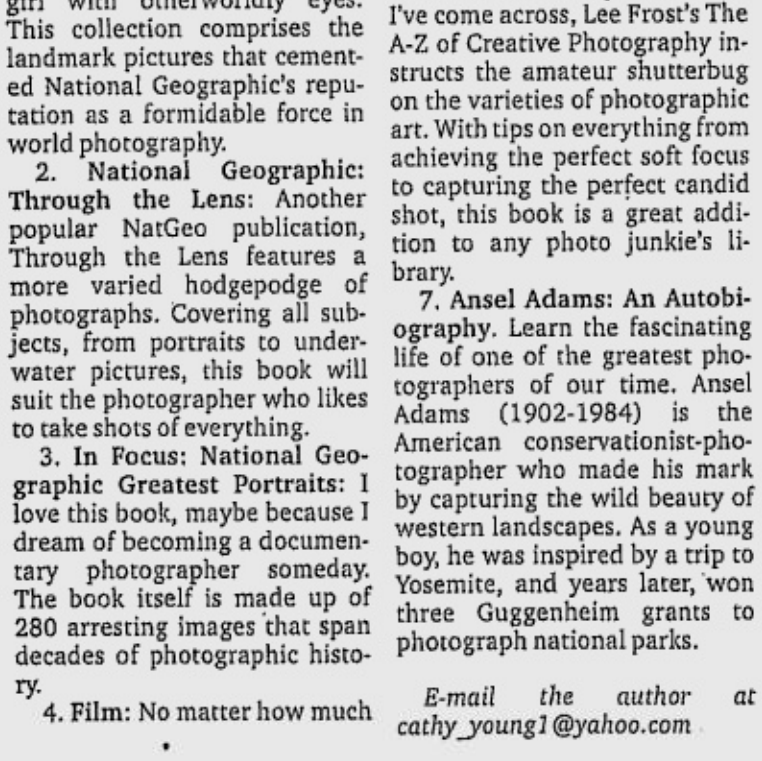
4. **Film:** No matter how much the digital camera has revolutionized photography, there is always room for the classic, purer form of film. Photography buffs who love to develop their own pictures (sometimes more for the ritual than for the results), will always appreciate a couple of rolls in their Christmas stocking.

5. **Memory stick:** For those who have gone way too trigger-happy with their digital cameras, memory sticks are a great way to go. This is especially a good idea for photo buffs who like to travel all the time, or those who just simply hate to delete anything. Plus, they're easy to wrap too.

6. **The A-Z of Creative Photography:** One of the most concise photo books I've come across, Lee Frost's The A-Z of Creative Photography instructs the amateur shutterbug on the varieties of photographic art. With tips on everything from achieving the perfect soft focus to capturing the perfect candid shot, this book is a great addition to any photo junkie's library.

7. **Ansel Adams: An Autobiography.** Learn the fascinating life of one of the greatest photographers of our time. Ansel Adams (1902-1984) is the American conservationist-photographer who made his mark by capturing the wild beauty of western landscapes. As a young boy, he was inspired by a trip to Yosemite, and years later, won three Guggenheim grants to photograph national parks.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com



IN FOCUS: National Geographic Greatest Portraits

Canon

MECHANICS:
1. Purchase selected Genuine Canon Bubble Jet Printer Inks at any dealers or retail outlets.
2. Look for the promo sticker "BIG SAVINGS, BIG CRAVINGS" with Free (1) Biggies Burger from Canon and Wendy's on the Genuine Canon BJ Printer Ink box.
3. To claim the free Biggies Burger, present the whole Genuine Canon BJ Printer Ink box to any branch of Wendy's in Metro Manila, Cavite, Laguna, Pampanga, Bulacan and Baguio City only.
4. The Manager or Supervisor of Wendy's will verify if the Canon BJ Printer Ink box presented is genuine or non-original.
5. To avail of additional (1) LARGE FRIES and (1) LARGE SOFTDRINK, just add P33.00 together with the Genuine Canon BJ Printer Ink box to the counter.
6. All claims will be valid for 60 days after the promo period.

Promo period is from December 1, 2004 to January 30, 2005.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5856, Series of 2004.
See posters and flyers for details.

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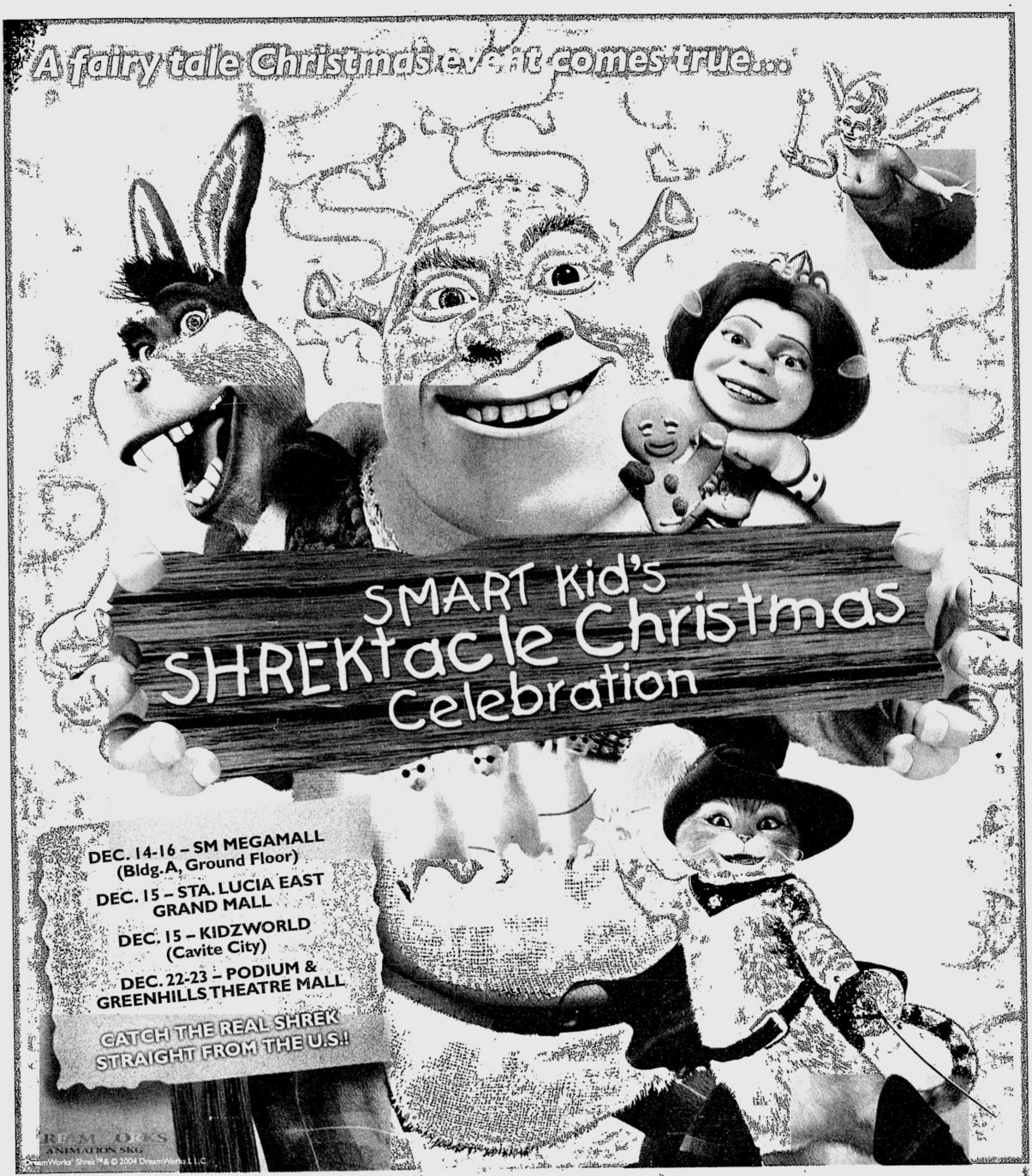
E-mail address: info@canon.com.ph • www.canon.com.ph

A fairy tale Christmas event comes true...



DEC. 14-16 – SM MEGAMALL
(Bldg. A, Ground Floor)

DEC. 15 – STA. LUCIA EAST
GRAND MALL

DEC. 15 – KIDZWORLD
(Cavite City)

DEC. 22-23 – PODIUM &
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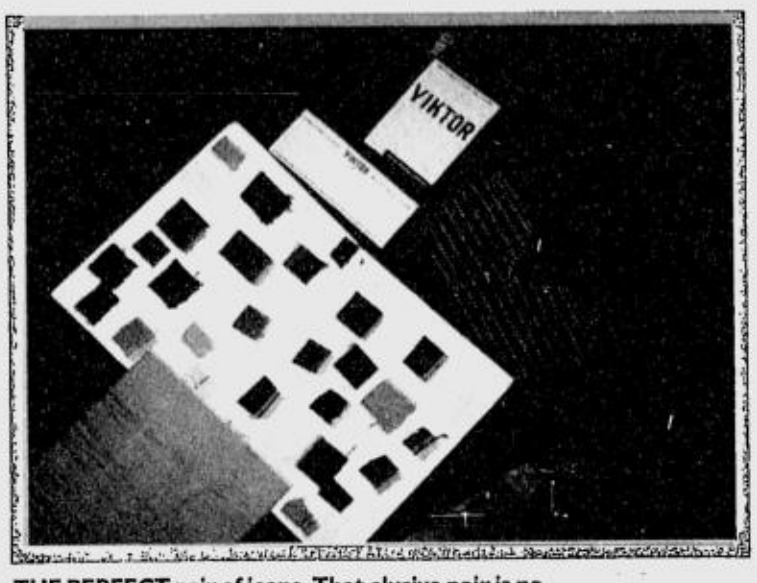
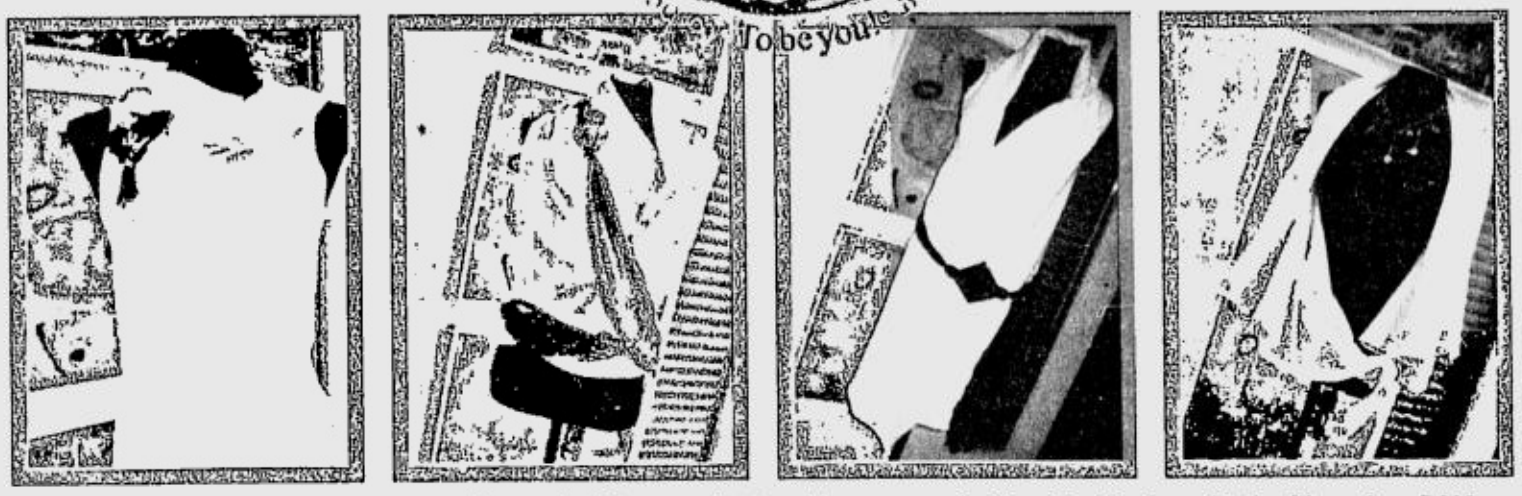


THE PERFECT pair of jeans. That elusive pair is no longer beyond your reach. Call Ino Caluza (0917-8504543) and get a gift card for you or your friend (or both!) for Kustom Fit Viktor Jeans. Thread wound Red Envelope already comes with a white card with various denim swatches to choose from! Be a citizen! Be fitter, richer, happier.

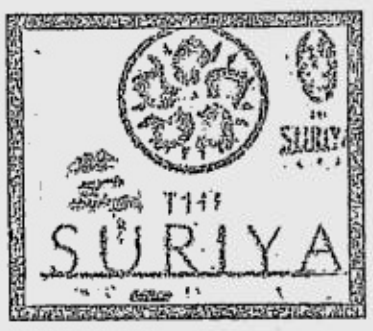


THE VERSATILE TOP. Give your best friend the station blouse and let her shine any way she likes. Ten-Way Ivory Station Blouse from RAJO. Also available in Lime, Aqua, Salmon, Fuchsia and Black. Comes in sleeveless and ¾ sleeved style. P2,395 House of Laurel (8975063), 6013 Villena corner Manalac, Makati City.

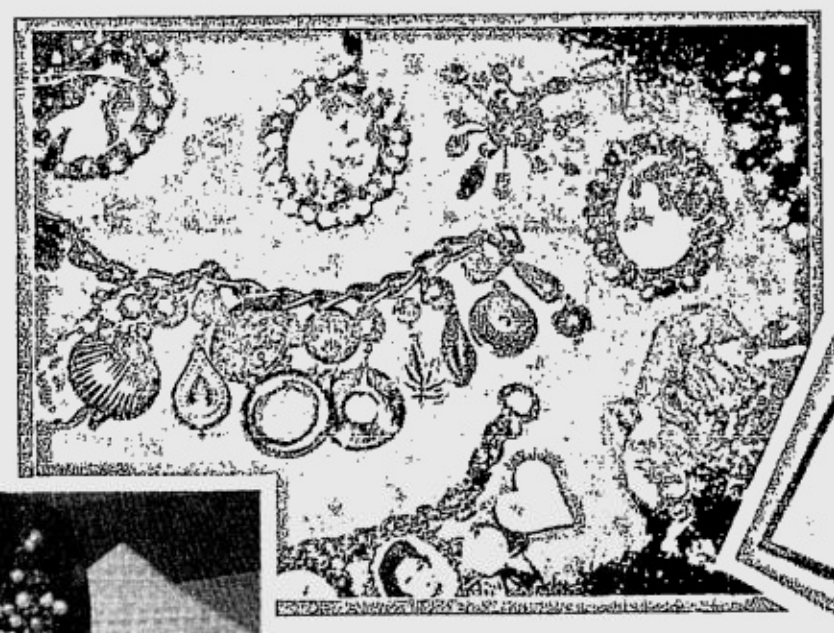
For the fab *fashionista*

Text and photos by Happy David
2bU! Correspondent

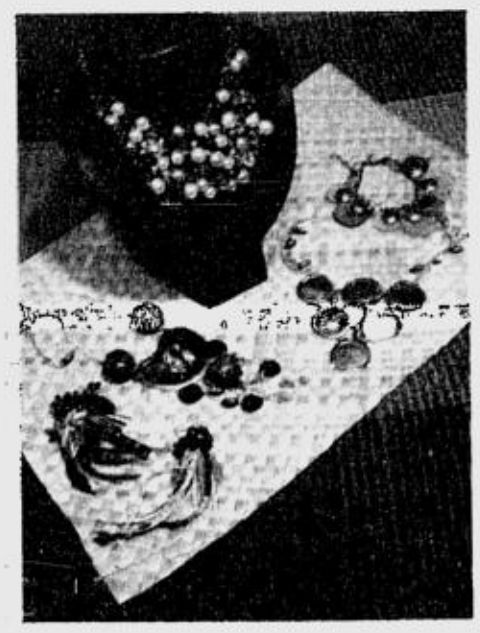
She's 'a girl who always looks current and cutting-edge even when her clothes are vintage 1950s. She wears what she likes and always looks fantastic...' So says 'The Fashionista Files'



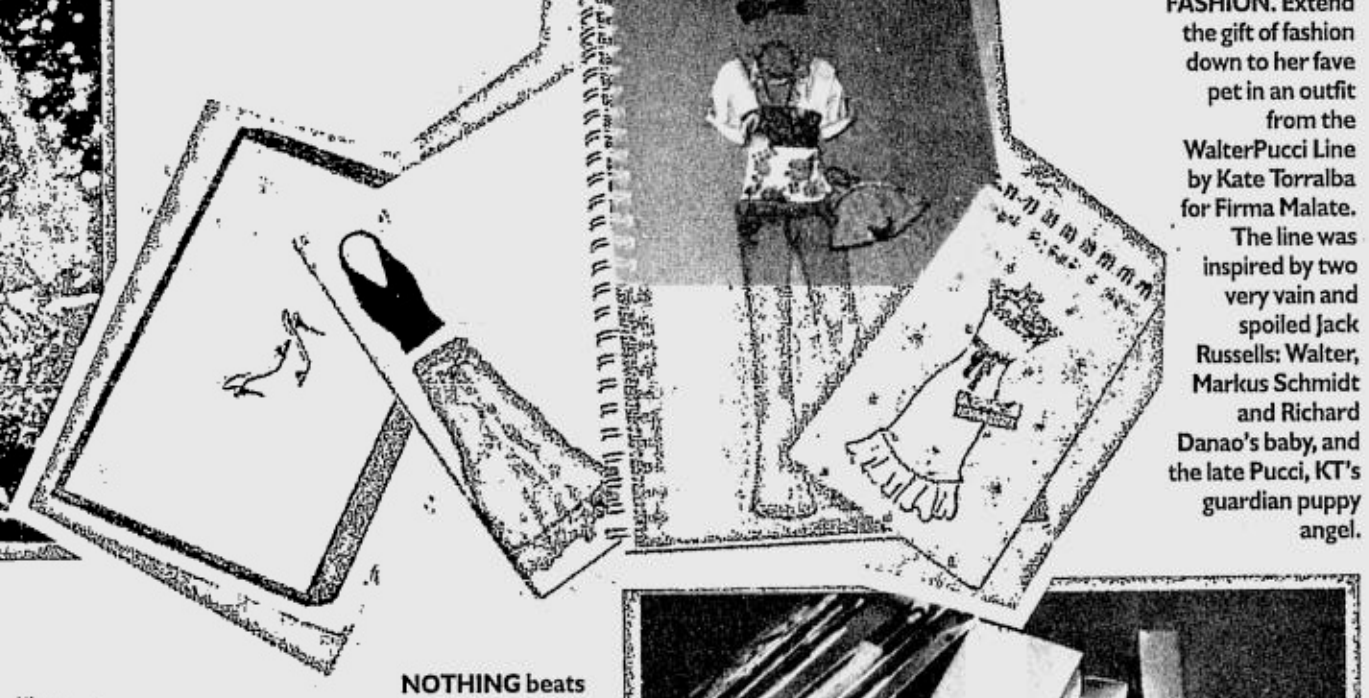
FOR tired shopping feet. Relaxing foot massage treatment gift voucher, P330, 15-20 percent off for members, The Suriya Spa at Gold's Gym, 3/F Glorietta 3 (8931818)



KEEP her safe and open to positive energy with this colorful bag charm talisman from the Middle East, P1,495, House of Laurel (8975063), 6013 Villena corner Manalac, Makati City.

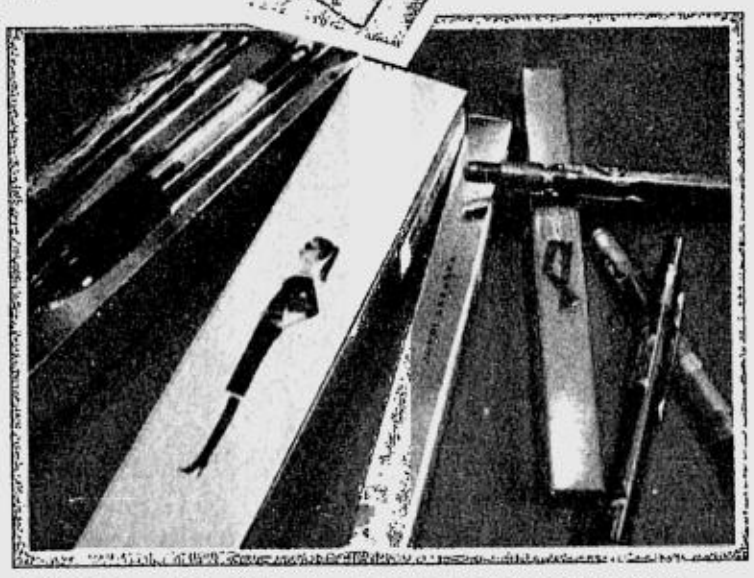


VINTAGE glam



POOCH FASHION. Extend the gift of fashion down to her fave pet in an outfit from the WalterPucci Line by Kate Torralba for Firma Malate. The line was inspired by two very vain and spoiled Jack Russells: Walter, Markus Schmidt and Richard Danao's baby, and the late Pucci, KT's guardian puppy angel.

MAGAZINE subscriptions to favorite fashion bibles. Call Mag:Net Plus 4100995/8177895/9293191.

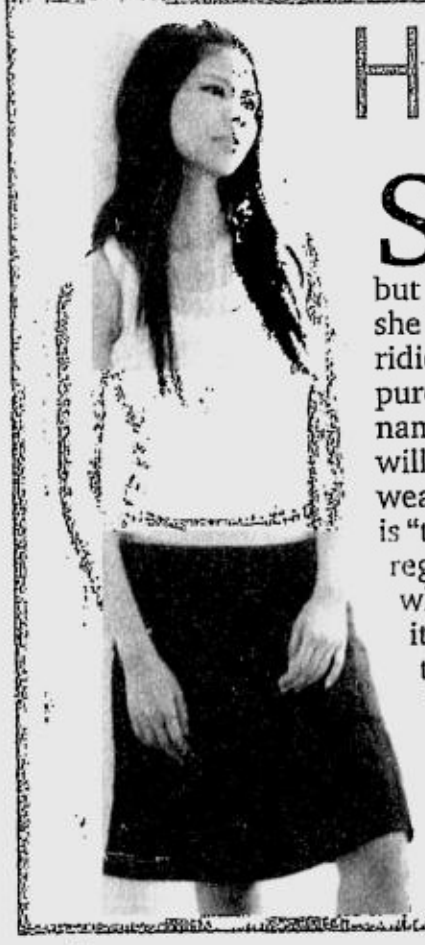


NOTHING beats the old world charm of personally handwritten notes. Make sure you do it right with these chic items. Rina Albert Fashion Illustration Paper Collection Mini Notebook P70, Journal Notebook P140, Memo Pad P40, PowerBooks

JORDI Labanda Pen Collection, Fully Booked, Power Plant Mall. Ballpen and mechanical pencil set, P399, mechanical pencil, P180, fountain pen, P439

GYPSY-inspired accessories for next year. Make sure she stays ahead of the pack with the latest accessories from Chi Chi Rico, inspired by the bohemian lifestyle trend for 2005. Chi Chi Rico, Market!Market!

Help for the fashion-challenged



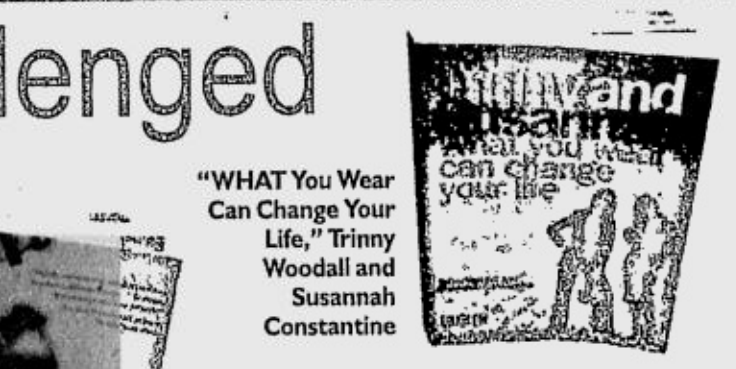
SHE buys an outfit that is perfectly in style, but when she wears it, she looks perfectly ridiculous. She only purchases brand-name apparel, and will only consider wearing an item that is "the latest trend," regardless of whether she can pull it off or not. Now there's a fashion victim. How to help her?

EQUIP her with the basics. 2bU! recommends Tyler, Bayo and Kashieca

"ALL You Need To Survive: Three Black Skirts," Anna Johnson P767, Fully Booked, Power Plant Mall

INTRODUCE her to the Fab 5. "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy," by Ted Allen, Kyan Douglas, Thom Filicia, Carson Kressley, Jai Rodriguez Php1,174, Fully Booked, Power Plant Mall

"THE FASHIONISTA Files," Melissa de la Cruz and Karen Robinovitz, P670, Fully Booked, Power Plant Mall

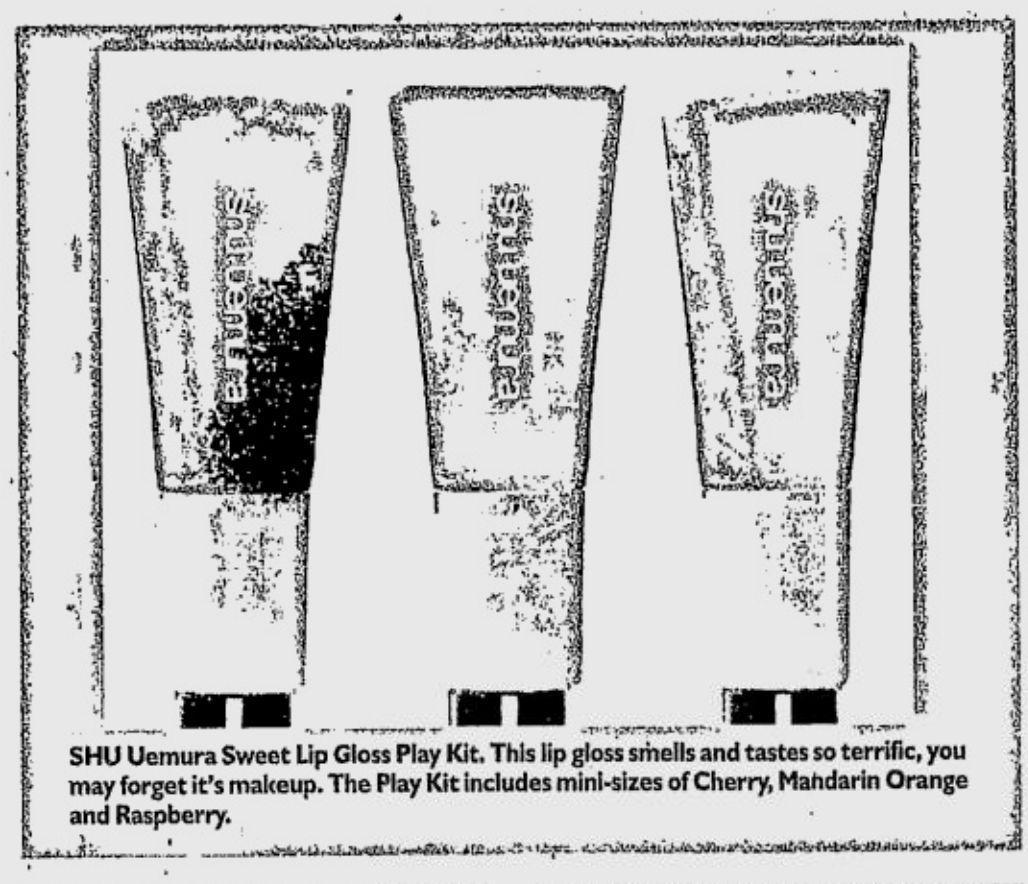


"WHAT You Wear Can Change Your Life," Trinny Woodall and Susannah Constantine

"WHAT Not to Wear" series, Trinny Woodall and Susannah Constantine, P545 and P454, Fully Booked, Power Plant Mall

Yummy yuletide

From page F1



SHU Uemura Sweet Lip Gloss Play Kit. This lip gloss smells and tastes so terrific, you may forget it's makeup. The Play Kit includes mini-sizes of Cherry, Mahdarin Orange and Raspberry.

THE BODY Shop fruity shower gels. Something you'd want to give to your younger siblings. The shower gels in Raspberry, Banana and Apple are fruity enough to eat.

Laura Mercier, Clean, Woods of Windsor, Apitiva, and Inno Sotto Mondo are found at Essenses, Rustan's. The Body Shop at all major malls. Tigi Bed Head is available at all leading professional salons. Shu Uemura at Rustan's Shangri-La and Makati.

INNO Sotto Mondo (ISM) EDT in Deauxville, P2,450. Perfect for your dad, favorite uncle or boyfriend, Deauxville smells fresh and light—a cross of citrus and the seaside.

APITIVA Aromatherapy Energy set, P745. The shower gel, shampoo, body scrub, and body milk smell of orange rinds—a perfect pick-me-up for sluggish days.

TIGI Bed Head Control Freak shampoo and conditioner. These products are perfect for frizzy hair, but you can also leave them on your dresser and sniff the pineapple scent every morning.

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Promo Period: Sept. 27- Dec. 14, 2004
Deadline of Entries:
Monthly Draws: October 17 and Nov. 17, 2004
Grand Draw: Dec. 14, 2004
Draw Dates:
Monthly Draw: October 22 and Nov. 22, 2004
Grand Draw: Dec. 21, 2004

See posters and print ads for details.
Per DTI Permit No. 2147, series of 2004

Drop in drop boxes located at Ayala and Robinson's cinema lobbies, and all LBC and Netopia branches. You may also mail entries to: Guyito Wild Hunt, PDI Bldg., corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City.

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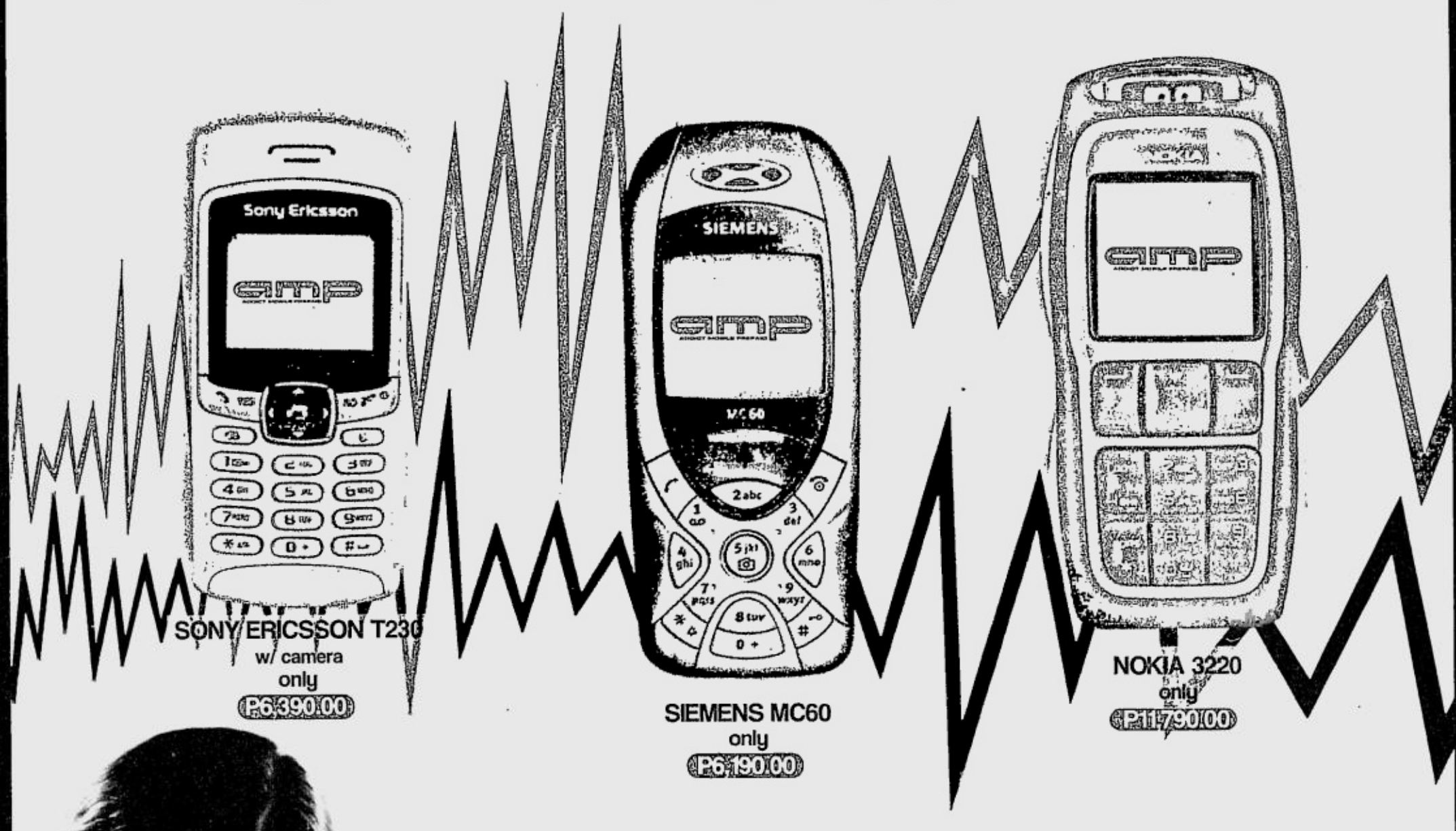
Get the whole gang groovin'



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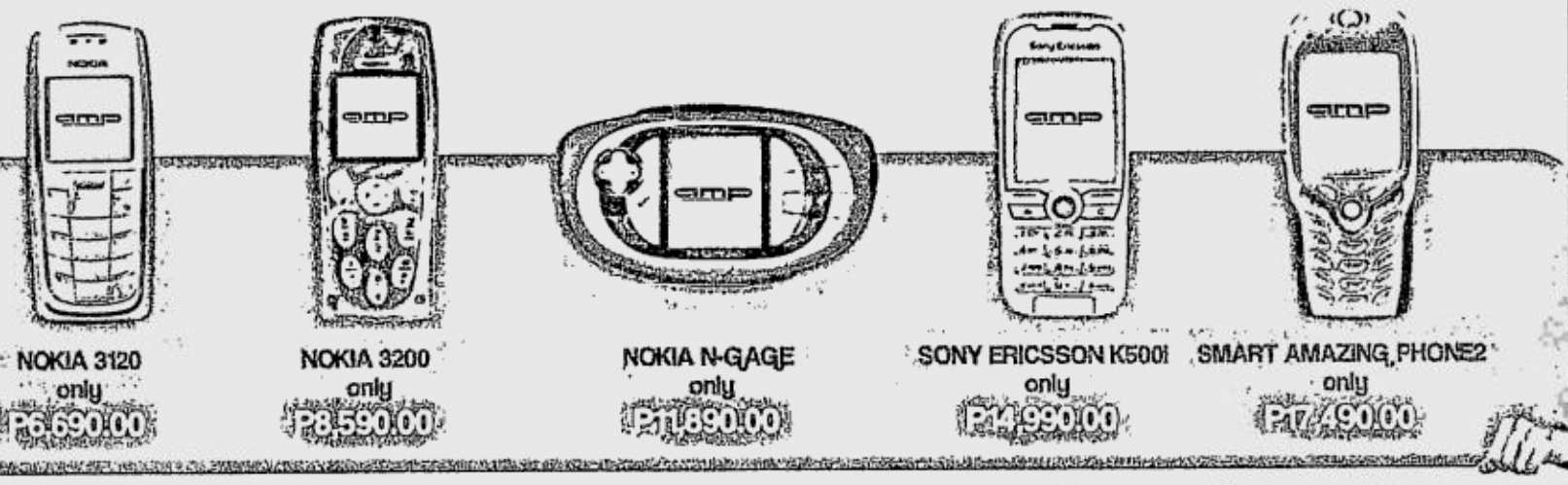

NOKIA 3120
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SONY ERICSSON K500i
only
P14,990.00

SMART AMAZING PHONE2
only
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Gather the gang, and score some AMP'd up freebies when you grab any of these affordable AMP MMS phone kits! Available only at SMART CELLebration.

Visit the SMART CELLebration booth at a mall nearest you!

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5554, Series of 2004.

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LIFESTYLE

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Text us your feedback:
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2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Find game cards in Kodak films for a chance to win instant cash prizes. Promo until December 31, 2004.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No.3914, Series of 2004

'Dalagita' delights

By Ines Bautista, *Contributor*
and the staff of Candy Magazine

BECAUSE the gifts you give clue your friends in to who you are, gift-giving is a task we all must face with some determination and lots of creativity.

So to save you time and holiday headaches, Candy magazine has put together a list of gifts that are fun, thoughtful, and sweet—just like you (or who you want your friends to think you are anyway)!

DALAGITA/ G2

VINYL Blank CD. For the buddy who loves anything vintage! Burn her a copy of her favorite tunes or simply give her a stack of 10. P28.50, Office Warehouse

POLKA-DOT slippers. Is she always complaining about how her poor feet hurt from her three-inch heels? Treat her to some slipper therapy. P290, Iya Guingona Lagdameo (E-mail iya_g@hotmail.com)

Down under and on top of the world.

by Lawrence Tinio
ALS IBO Qualifier

AMWAY's top Independent Business Owners (IBOs) for Fiscal Year 2004 huddle for a souvenir shot during the Amway Leadership Seminar (ALS) 2004 in Gold Coast, Australia. As the company's prime sales incentive program, the ALS is an annual overseas fete awarded to IBOs in recognition of their outstanding sales and distribution performance for the year.

"Do they bite?" My hand was shaking as I tried to reach out to touch their ear. Mustering enough courage, I shrugged and just took comfort in the impression that they looked innocent and gentle. True enough, their furry brown coat, much like that of a cat, was soft to the touch. And upclose, they looked so adorably cute. Kangaroos - I'm definitely not in Manila anymore.

Before embarking on the ALS Gold Coast adventure, my wife Sherry Lynn and I did not even have a passport. Overseas travel was not even in our plans, nor in our dreams. Amway co-founder Rich DeVos hit it right on the head when he said, "You have to have hope before you can dream." Not long after, I realized the business indeed gave me true hope to dream, and now, I and Sherry Lynn are starting to live that dream."

Warner Bros. Movie World was just like in the movies. We walked the streets of Gotham with Batman and Robin; had out picture taken in Hollywood with Austin Powers and Marilyn Monroe; stood beside Neo of the blockbuster flick Matrix to fight the sentinels; and gawked when Batman zoomed overhead. For a movie buff like me, the place was heaven!

What would it take for you to touch the real Batmobile? How about riding the Hogwarts Express from Platform 9 3/4? How does a bunch of cadets from the Police Academy blowing up a helicopter 30 feet away, sound to you?

In our trip to Gold Coast, we also walked along the beach at Surfers Paradise, admired the city of Brisbane from the peak of Mt. Coot-ha, drove through the race course of the Indy 300, and shopped in an island-mall called Pacific Fair.

The best is always saved for last, as they say. The finale in our itinerary was an enchanted evening on a showboat while cruising down a lazy river. Later that night, the entertainment took a surprising twist during the audience participation segment when Ernie Fernandez stole the show with his Samoan Dance and Dale Ibay with his rousing musical performance.

When asked if Gold Coast was nice, I tell them New Zealand will be far more beautiful. Because that is where we intend to qualify next year. But wherever our success in the business takes us, Amway surely finds a way to make its deserving IBOs feel like they're always on top of the world!

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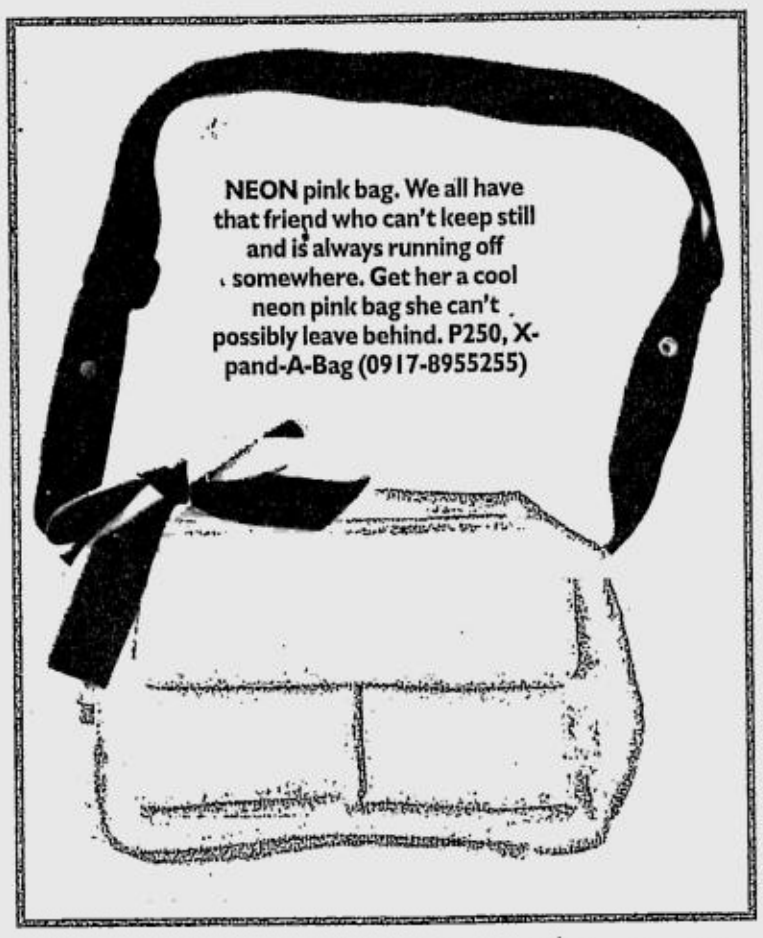
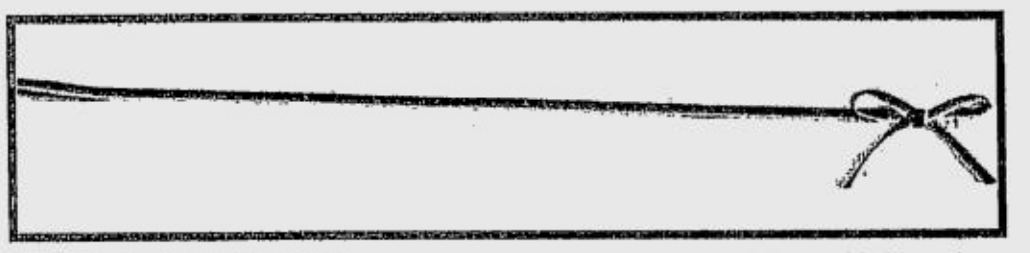
'Dalagita' delights

From page G1

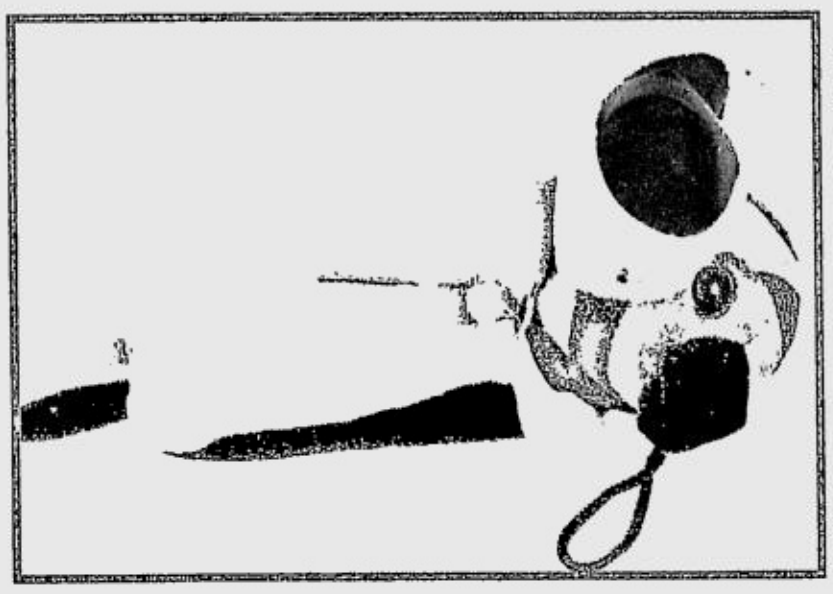
CELL phone holder. Is your buddy hankering for a new phone? Try this cheaper yet cuter alternative. P250, Funky Finds



NEON pink bag. We all have that friend who can't keep still and is always running off somewhere. Get her a cool neon pink bag she can't possibly leave behind. P250, X-pand-A-Bag (0917-8955255)

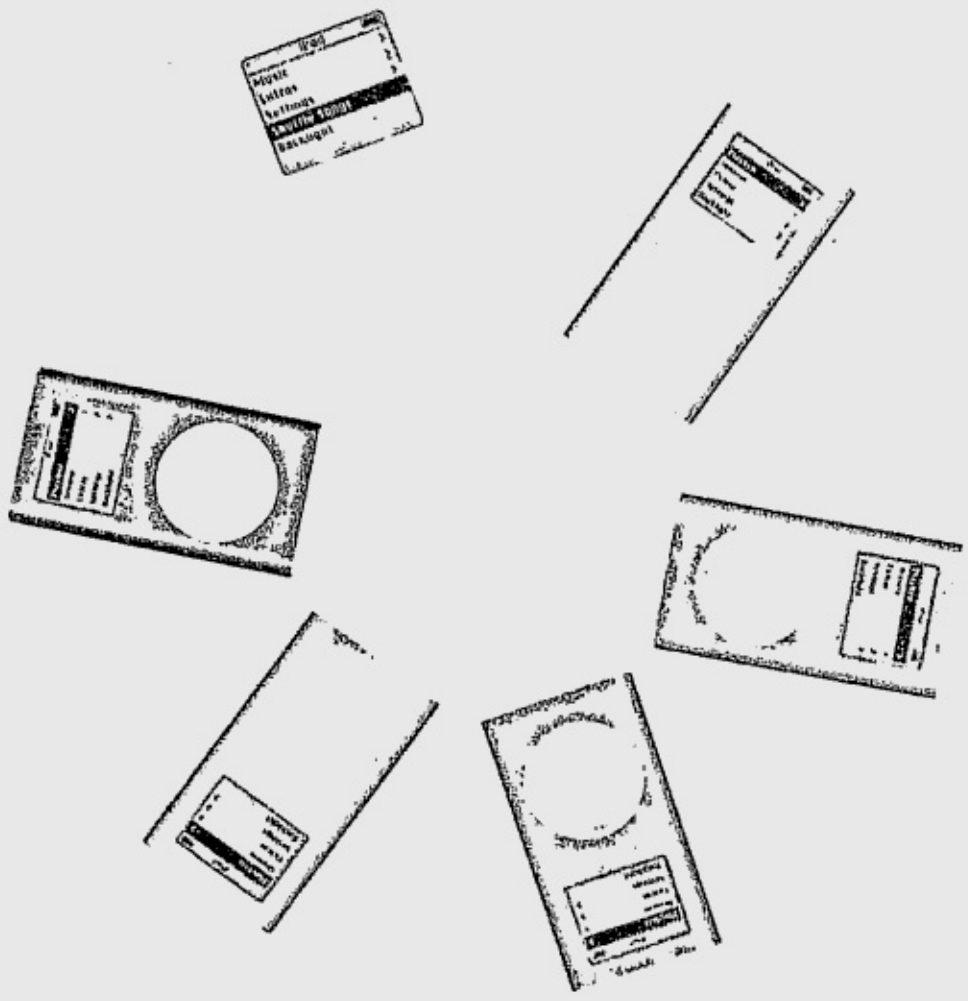


STRIPED BOW BELT. This cherry-toned belt will spice up your buddy's boring khakis-and-white-tee look. P195, Shang



THE DOG PENCIL CASE. Your classmate keep filching your precious pens? With this adorable bag buddy, she'll never forget her pens at home again. P180, Penchants

I'm dreaming
of a white (or shiny silver,
gold, green, pink or blue)
Christmas...



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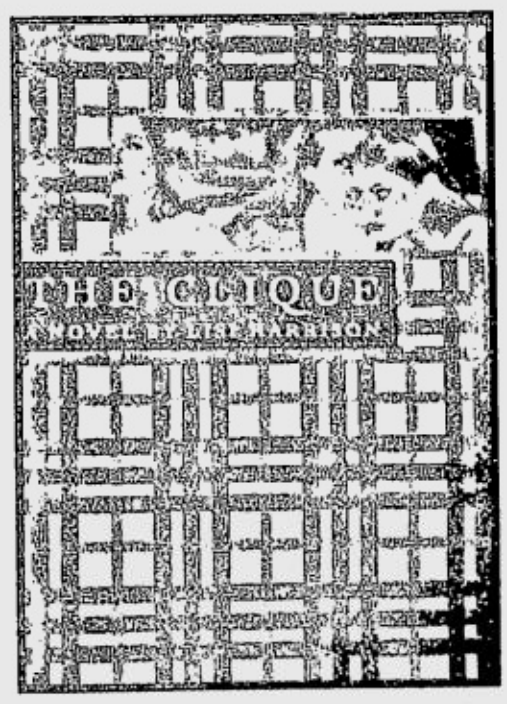
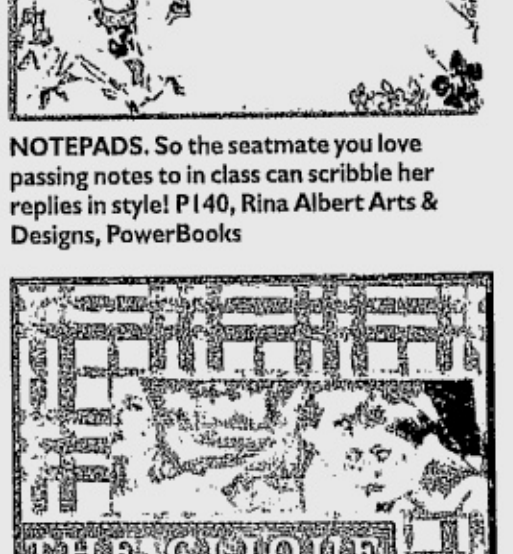
GREEN PAW PRINT SOCKS. Indulge your friend's animal-loving craze by slipping her feet into some paw prints. P40, Penchants

NOTEPADS. So the seatmate you love passing notes to in class can scribble her replies in style! P140, Rina Albert Arts & Designs, PowerBooks



"THE CLIQUE," a novel by Lisi Harrison. If she loved "Mean Girls," she'll definitely devour this fun read! P366, Fully Booked

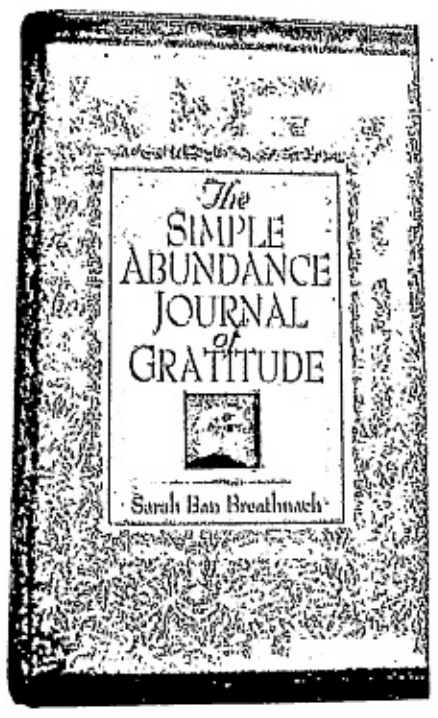


MISTINE Lip and Cheek Tint. Dying to give your gal pal a makeover? Start her off with something fun and simple to bring out her pretty glow. P150, Mimi Cosmetics

Seventeen selects

By Mia Fausto
Contributor

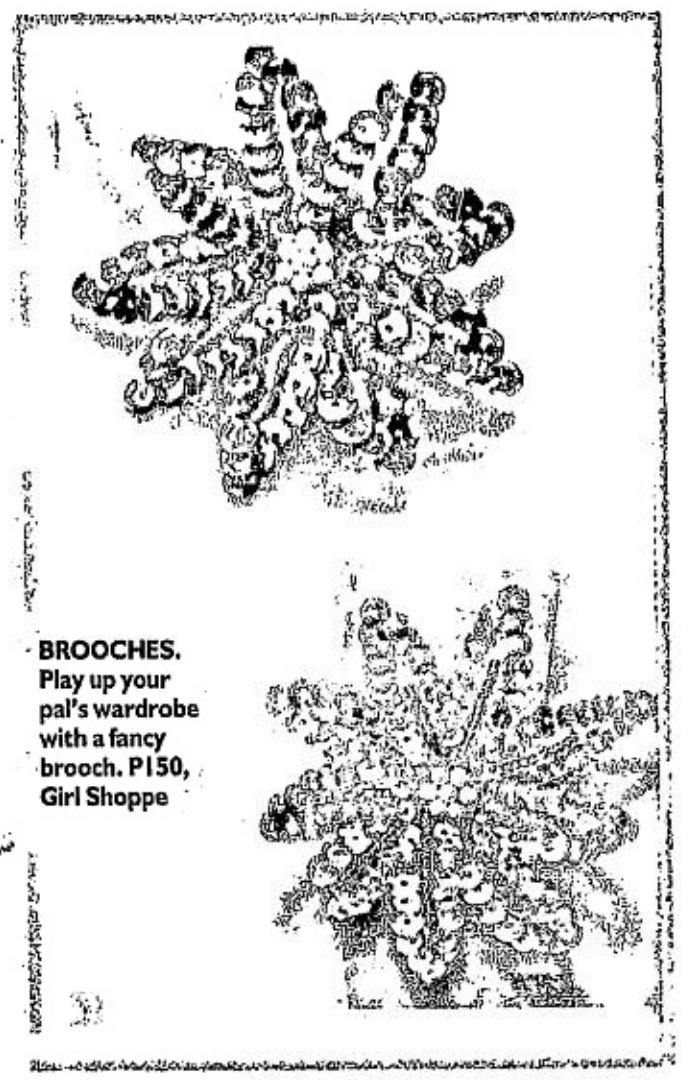
Whether you've been naughty or nice, you'll love Seventeen mag's present-perfect picks!



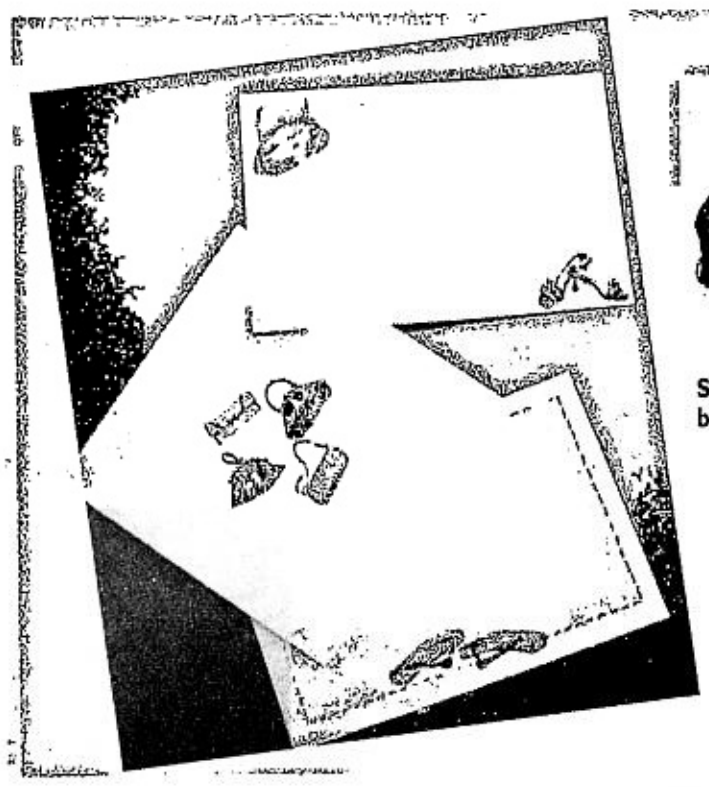
GRATITUDE Journal. For the girl who has everything, give her a gift to nurture her soul. P595, PowerBooks

WALLET. Trade in her wallet for something more stylish. P150, Funky Finds

YELLOW TANK. Basic tank tops in yummy colors will always find space in her closet, P199.75, SM



BROOCHES. Play up your pal's wardrobe with a fancy brooch. P150, Girl Shoppe



NOTECARDS. Pretty notecards are something friends would love to have but won't exactly splurge on. (It's even cooler if they're personalized!) Assorted notecards, about P120-250, PowerBooks

SHOE HOLDER. Let your boy buds tote this along to b-ball practices, P275, Make Room

BAG. This quirky bag puts the fun in functional, P300, to order from Betti Bags, 0917-5349021

WASTE BIN. Keep his room—or his car—well-accessorized, P89.75, SM Home World

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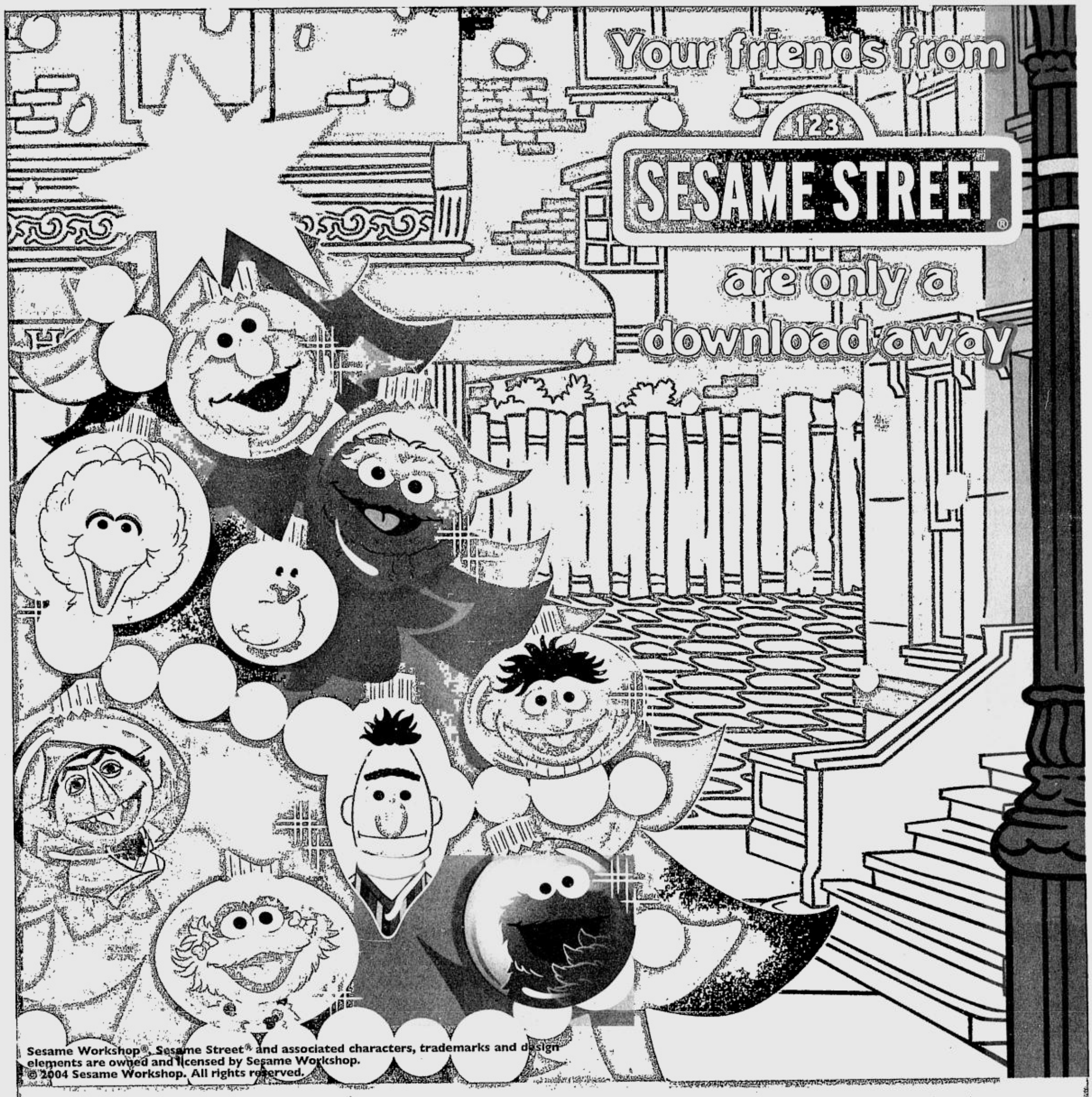

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ernestar bertxmas holidays
TEXT PIC <keyword> to 234

Song Title	Keyword
SILENT NIGHT	SilentNight
JOY TO THE WORLD	Joy2DWorld
TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS	12daysXmas

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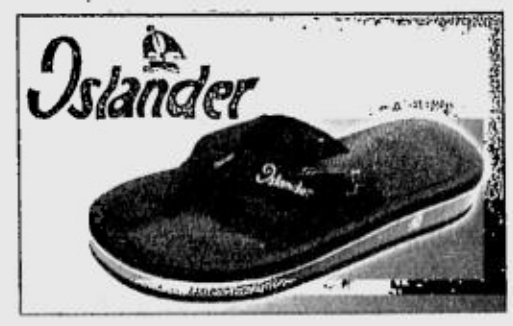

BizWhiz

THE ENTREPRENEUR'S Success Kit, Fully Booked, Power Plant Mall

Compiled by Happy David
2bU! Correspondent

WHAT makes an entrepreneur? Focus. Courage. Creativity. The ability to see opportunity. Aggressiveness. Good people skills. Some say it's entrepreneurs that will save this country. Equip them with the basic tools now.

BIZ WHIZ/ H4

REMIND them to have fun while learning the ropes of business. Cashflow board game, P14,995, Hobbes

CELEBRATE their first checkbook with this colored leatherette holder/wallet from Get Happy, P300, Rustan's U, Makati.

PHOTOS BY HAPPY DAVID

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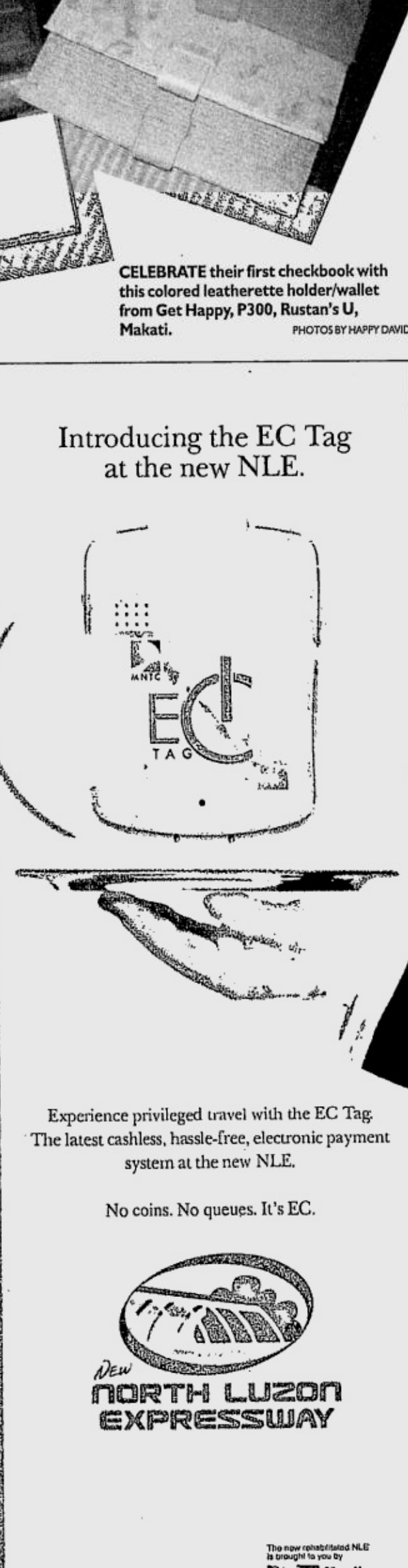

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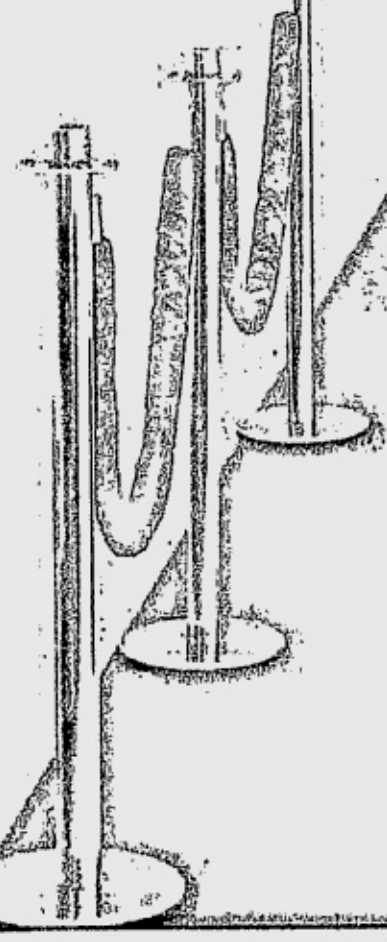

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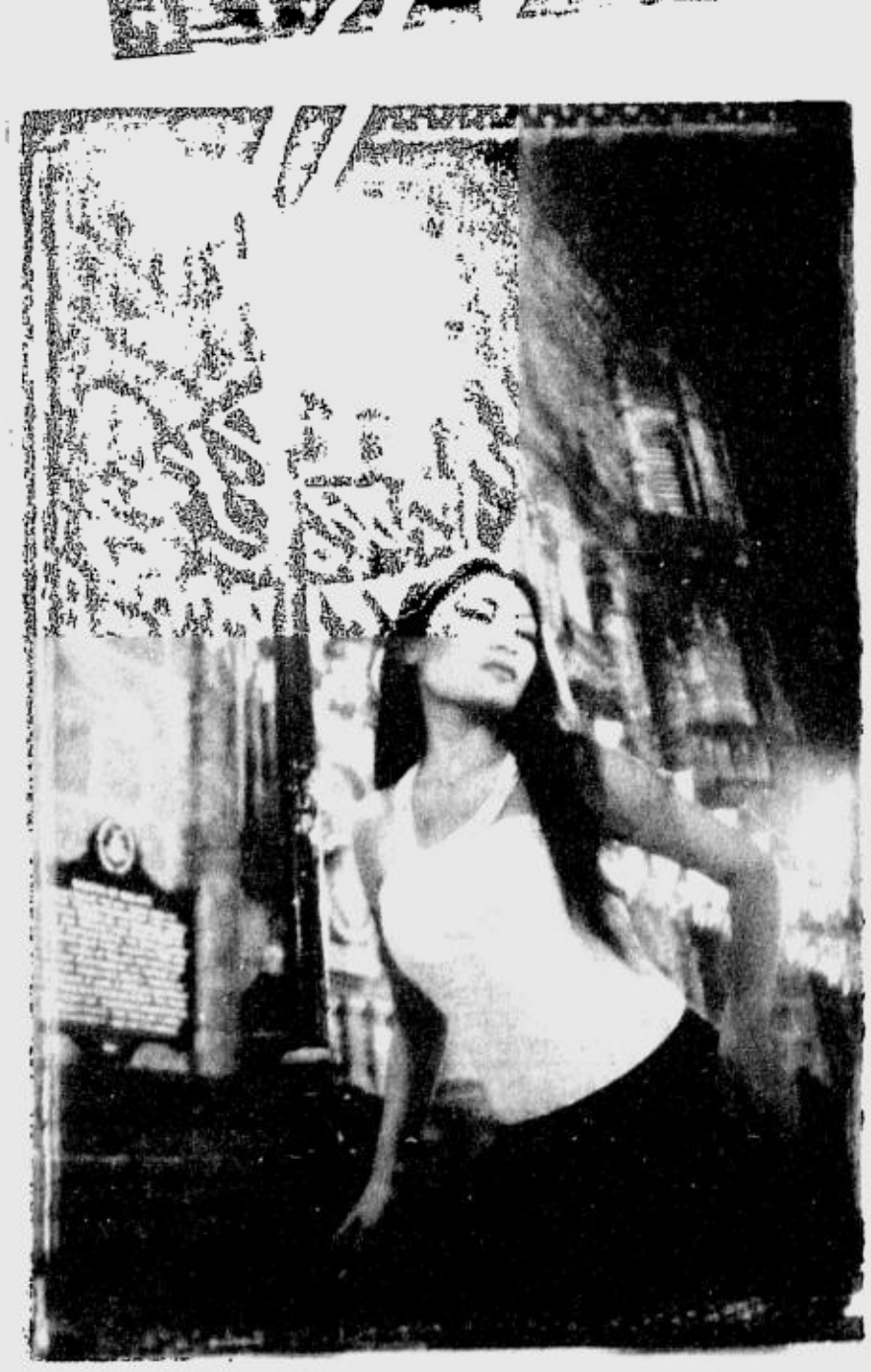
BLACK and white gown with multicolored embroidery, Patis Tesoro. White jacket, Karimadon. Brooches, necklaces and chandelier earrings from Get Happy

ON AIZ: Purple and black beaded corset, Patis Tesoro. Red dress (used as a skirt), P995, Karimadon. Made to order fabric and ribbon necklace with hand-sewn acrylic crystals from Happy David

Let it flow



Text and styling by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent
Photos by Jake Verzosa
CO-STYLISTS: ABY PUZON AND HAPPY DAVID

LOOKING for an interesting holiday outfit? Eschew the Santa Claus look imported from the North Pole (the hat is cute, but it gets pretty old after a while) and look for clothes inspired by Philippine Christmases.

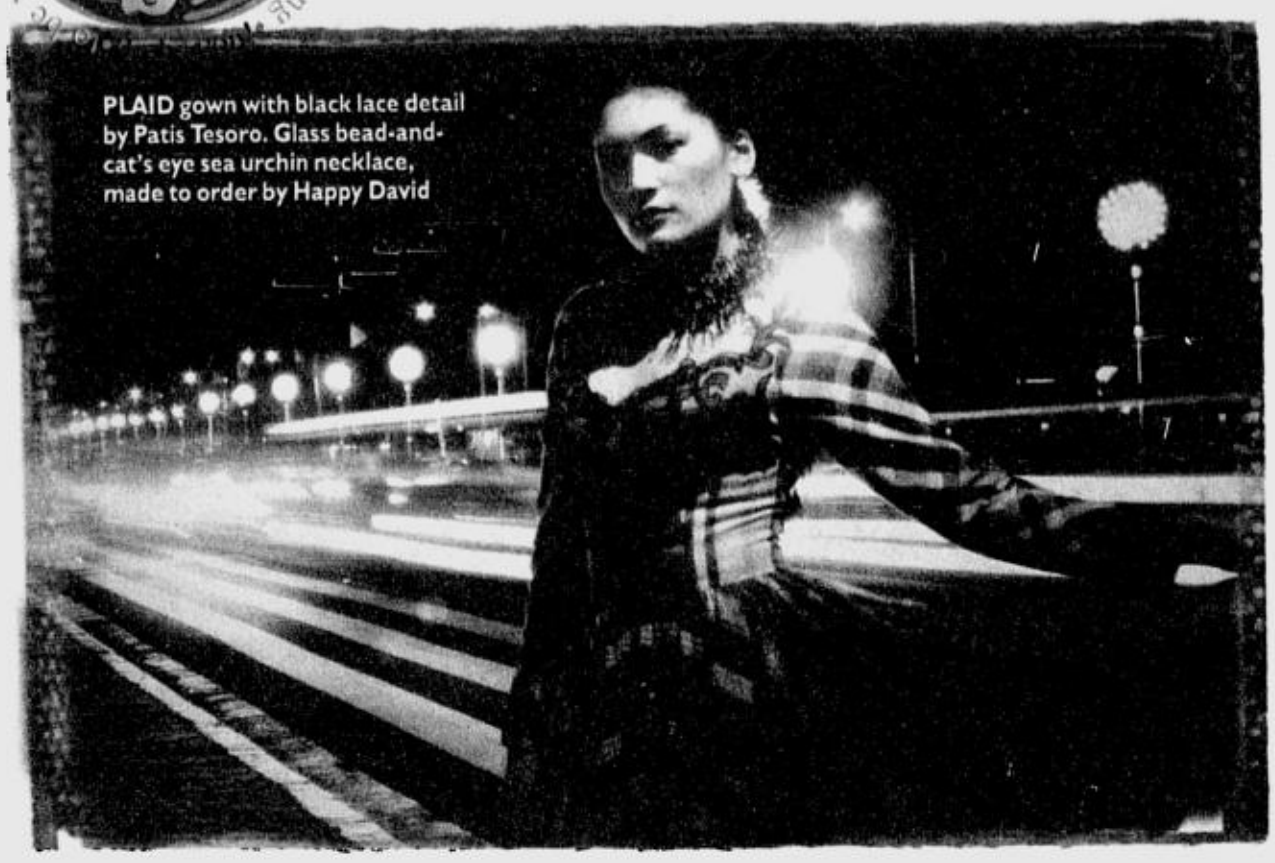
Pair sheer fabrics in jewel colors with crystal accessories to capture the festive feel of Pampanga lanterns. If you prefer the simplicity of the parol, choose clothes with clean, simple lines and flowing fabric. That way, you'll look more original than the candy canes on your Christmas tree.

E-mail biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

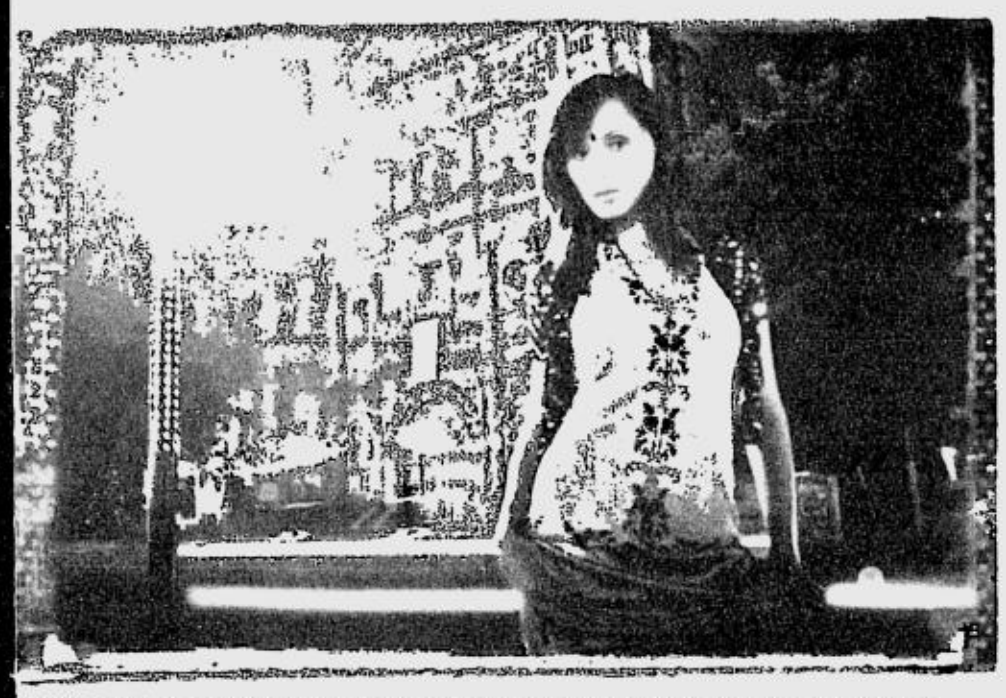
Contact the photographer at jakee.blogspot.com

WHITE corset and emerald green skirt, Patis Tesoro. Pearl necklace, stylist's own

RED ruffled tank top, P895. Details Trading. Red and gold Muslim-inspired skirt, Patis Tesoro. Beaded gold cuff, P995, and made-to-order fabric and ribbon necklace with hand-sewn acrylic crystals by Happy David



PLAID gown with black lace detail by Patis Tesoro. Glass bead-and-cat's eye sea urchin necklace, made to order by Happy David



GRAY and black halter, P695, and black bolero, Details Trading. Orange skirt from Patis Tesoro. Earrings, model's own

Eschew the Santa Claus look imported from the North Pole and go for clothes inspired by Philippine Christmases

Models: Michelle Quizon for Details Trading and Aiza Twaño.
Makeup by Geolette Esguerra (0915-5426790).
Aby Puzon (0917-8586585) and Happy David (0917-8106274).

SPECIAL THANKS TO MAYOR LITO ATIENZA, ERIC CHAM, AND THE CITY OF MANILA. SHOT IN THE MALATE CHURCH, PLAZA RAJAH SULAYMAN, BAYWALK, ROXAS BOULEVARD AND THE MCARTHUR BRIDGE.

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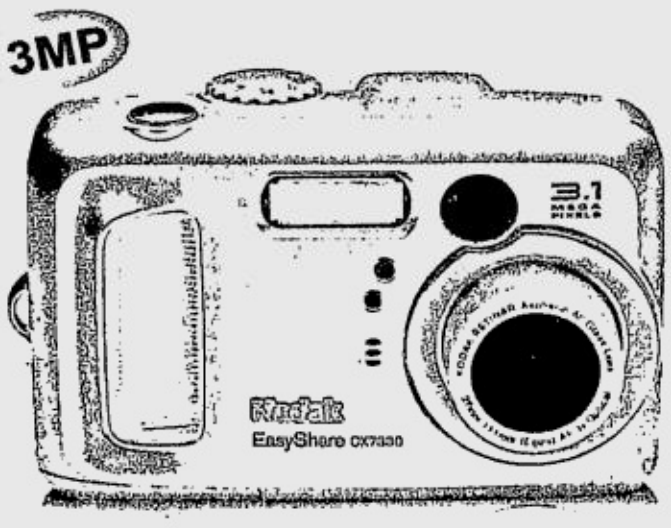

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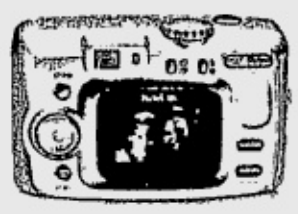

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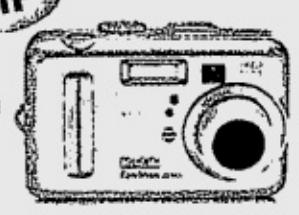

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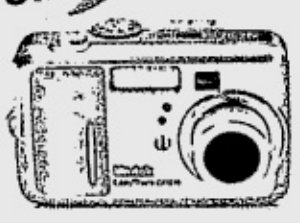

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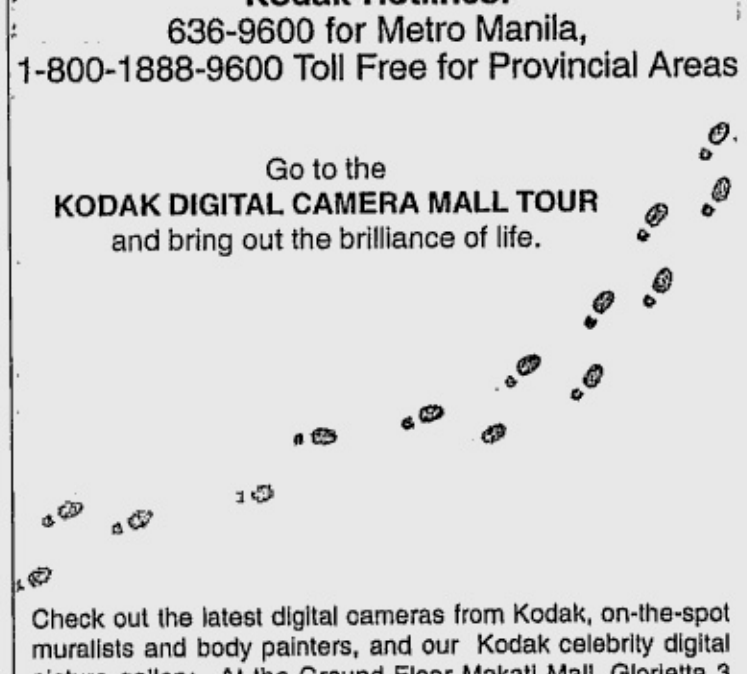

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MALL TOURS
4, Saturday
Enrique Marcos
12, Sunday
Jerome Abalos
14, Tuesday
Francis Magalona

COMPETITIONS
5, Sunday
Christmas Tree Making
10-12, Friday to Sunday
6th Phil. Full Contact Sports National Championship
11, Saturday
Caroling Cheers Grand Finals
18, Saturday
United Pitbull Club: Battle of the Champions
19, Sunday
Modelo 2004

MINI-CONCERTS
10, Friday
Perfect Rhythm
16, Thursday
Ramp and Rhythm in Yule!
18, Saturday
A Night of Carols feat. Caroling Cheers Winners

SHOWS & ACTIVITIES
25, Saturday
Christmas Magic Show
30, Thursday
Jugglers and Acrobats
Every Wednesday & Friday
Acoustic Nights

HOLIDAY SPECIAL
24, Friday
Meet and Greet Santa

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MALL TOURS
8, Wednesday
Francis Magalona
15, Wednesday
Jerome Abalos
19, Sunday
Enrique Marcos

COMPETITIONS
5, Sunday
- Belen Making
- On The Spot Christmas Card Making Contest
16, Thursday
Caroling Cheers Grand Finals

MINI-CONCERTS
3, Friday
Perfect Rhythm
22, Wednesday
A Night of Carols feat. Caroling Cheers Winners
26, Sunday
Ramp and Rhythm in Yule!

SHOWS & ACTIVITIES
12, Sunday
Nestle Presents: Tyrone Perez and Sheryn Regis
Christmas Magic at Starland
19, Sunday
Funkids Christmas Party
25, Saturday
Character Theme Host Show
30, Thursday
Christmas Magic Show

HOLIDAY SPECIAL
24, Friday
Meet and Greet Santa

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MALL TOURS
4, Saturday
Jerome Abalos
14, Tuesday
Enrique Marcos

COMPETITIONS
5, Sunday
Lantern Making
11, Saturday
Caroling Cheers Grand Finals

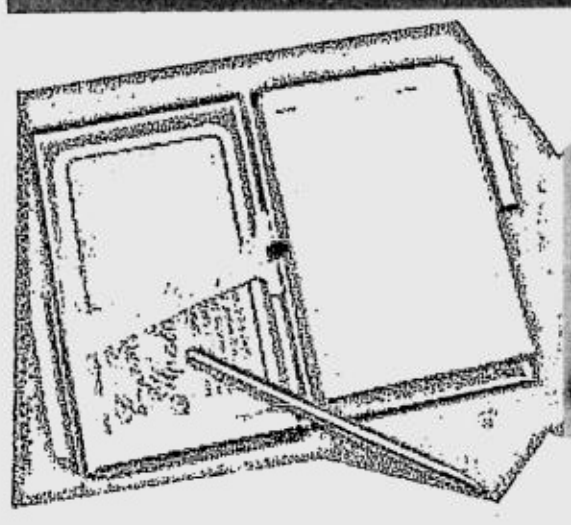
MINI-CONCERTS
12, Sunday
Ramp and Rhythm in Yule!
16, Thursday
A Night of Carols feat. Caroling Cheers Winners
23, Thursday
Perfect Rhythm

SHOWS & ACTIVITIES
4, Saturday
Friendster's Grand Eyeball
18, Saturday
Holly Harpists from Canada
25, Saturday
Jugglers and Acrobats Show
30, Thursday
Ron Michael's World of Magic
Every Friday
Spectacular Fireworks Display with Live Bands
Every Wednesday
Ladies' Night at Mark's Sports Bar
Nightly
NBA Nights at Mark's Sports Bar

HOLIDAY SPECIAL
24, Friday
Meet and Greet Santa

BizWhiz

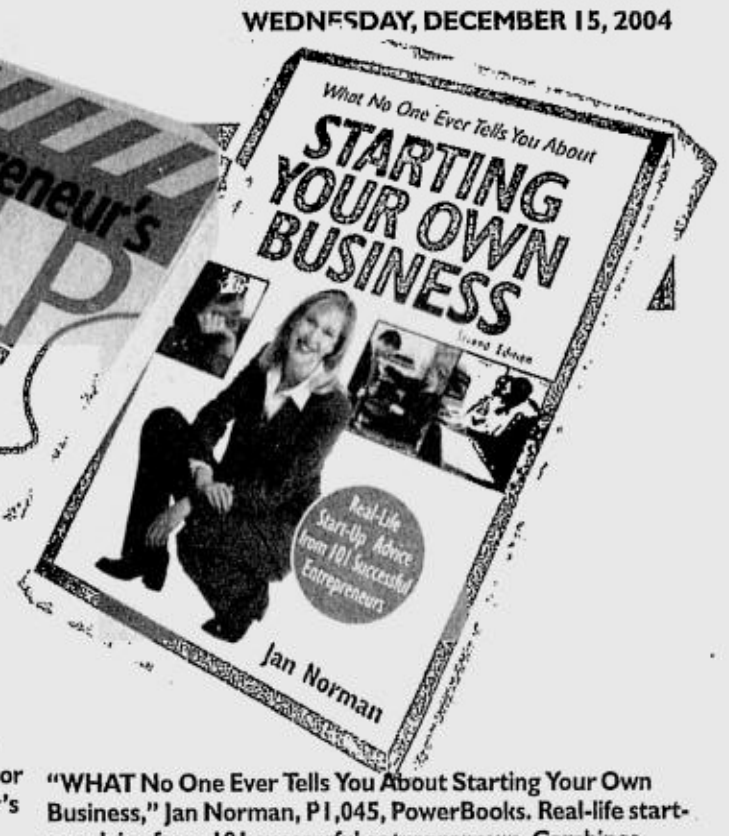
From page H1



CALLING card holder, Fully Booked, Power Plant Mall

"IF YOU'RE Clueless About Starting Your Own Business and Want to Know More," Seth Godin, P895, PowerBooks

GIVE the gospel of entrepreneurship according to a local guru: AIM professor Alejandro J. Ferreria's "Entrepreneur's Helpline." A perfect resource for practicing and aspiring entrepreneurs. P675, PowerBooks



"WHAT No One Ever Tells You About Starting Your Own Business," Jan Norman, P1,045, PowerBooks. Real-life start-up advice from 101 successful entrepreneurs. Combines practical and straightforward how-to's with interesting and memorable success stories.

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intel inside centrino MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

READY, set, go! A Speedzone race is so exciting, he won't even notice you gave him a gift.

From Santa to Scrooge

By Gmeleen Tomboc
2bU! Correspondent

DO we even give anything to the perpetual Scrooge? The instinctive thing is to completely eliminate him from our list. But even the most hardcore Christmas hater would appreciate a thing or two. So here are some gift suggestions for people who don't like gifts:

10. A no-nonsense Christmas card, definitely not of the popup or musical types.

9. A framed, blowup picture of him. He may not like gifts, but you'd bet he'd hang this one on the wall.

8. A Sun Cellular 24/7 Call and Text Unlimited SIM. Who can resist unlimited calls?

7. Gift certificates from Rustan's, Mercury Drug or SM. Very practical gifts for very practical persons.

6. A videoke showdown at Red Box Karaoke. With singing as our national pastime, nothing should go wrong with this present.

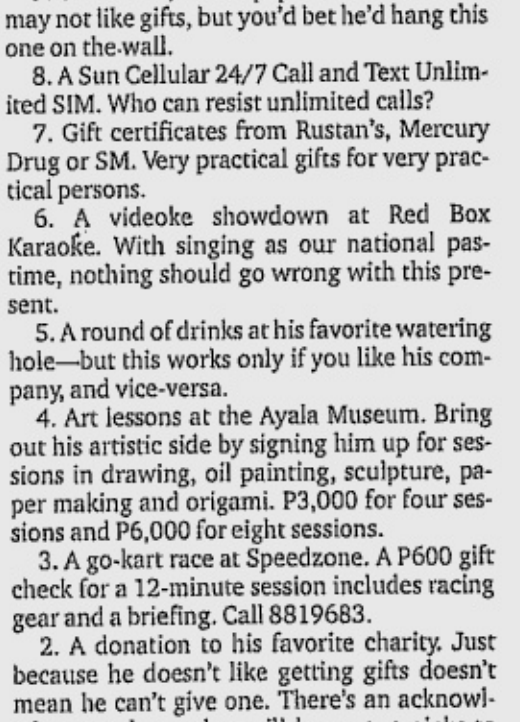
5. A round of drinks at his favorite watering hole—but this works only if you like his company, and vice-versa.

4. Art lessons at the Ayala Museum. Bring out his artistic side by signing him up for sessions in drawing, oil painting, sculpture, paper making and origami. P3,000 for four sessions and P6,000 for eight sessions.

3. A go-kart race at Speedzone. A P600 gift check for a 12-minute session includes racing gear and a briefing. Call 8819683.

2. A donation to his favorite charity. Just because he doesn't like getting gifts doesn't mean he can't give one. There's an acknowledgement letter that will be sent straight to him if you give to, say, Caritas Manila in his name. Visit www.caritas.org.ph.

1. A good deed. Sometimes, the best gifts in life are free. Offer to take his dog for a walk, water his plants or do his errands for a day. You can even do Christmas shopping for him, if you are crazy enough to go to the malls this December.



MAKE a contribution in his name to the ABS-CBN Foundation for the kids of Bantay Bata.

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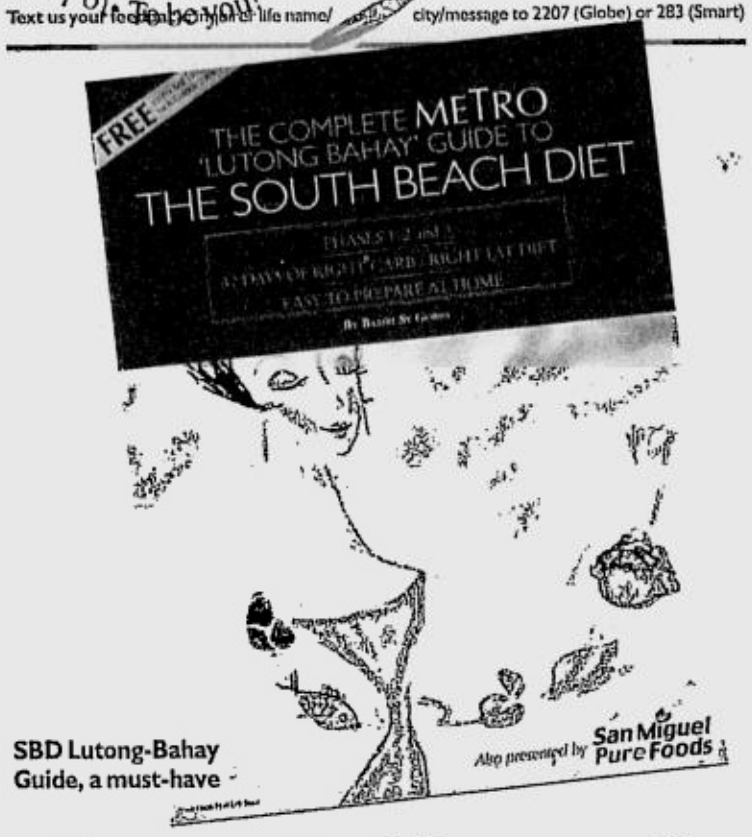
For feedback, e-mail us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

Text us your feedback, stylish life name/ city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)



SBD Lutong-Bahay Guide, a must-have

South Beach Diet holidays

By Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

PERHAPS your mom, friend, or even your dad is itching to try out the current fitness rage, the South Beach Diet (SBD), but don't know where to begin.

Well, here are some SBD-related things to check out, from the original book itself to "lutong bahay" specials to the numbers of SBD chefs to call for that delicious but healthy *noche buena* feast.

Here are some SBD-related things to check out, from the original book itself to 'lutong bahay' specials to chefs' numbers

The South Beach Diet: The Delicious, Doctor-Designed, Foolproof Plan for Fast and Healthy Weight Loss by Arthur Agatston hardbound (P985) available in National Bookstore and PowerBooks.

The South Beach Diet Cookbook: More than 200 Delicious Recipes That Fit the Nation's Top Diet, by Arthur Agatston hardbound (P1,275) softcover (P975) available in National Bookstore and PowerBooks.

South Beach Diet Good Fats/Good Carbs Guide: The Complete and Easy Reference for All Your Favorite Foods, by Arthur Agatston (P335) available in National bookstore and PowerBooks.

Call PowerBooks at Greenbelt 4, 7576428 to 29; Alabang Town Center, 8505662, 8505155; Megamall 6352898 to 99; Glorietta 3, 7527067.

Metro's Complete South Beach Diet "Lutong Bahay" Recipes. Free with every purchase of Metro magazine's November 2004 issue with Jericho Rosales and Celine Lopez on the cover (P100).

Call ABS-CBN Publishing Circulation Office, 4152272 loc. 4657-58; Mag:net (4100995).

South Beach Diet meals

Florabel Co: P 1,000 a day, for three meals and two light snacks. Pick-up in Quezon City, Greenhills, Ortigas and Makati. Deliveries in Makati. Call 0917-8117334.

Cibo: P1,000 a day, for three meals and snacks in between meals. Pick-up in all Cibo outlets (Glorietta 4, Shangri-La Plaza, Alabang Town Center, SM Megamall, ABS-CBN and Power Plant Rockwell), Pepato in Greenbelt 2, Ayala Center and Café Bola (Greenbelt 3, Coliseum Circle, Araneta Center). Call 9133965 or 9123705.

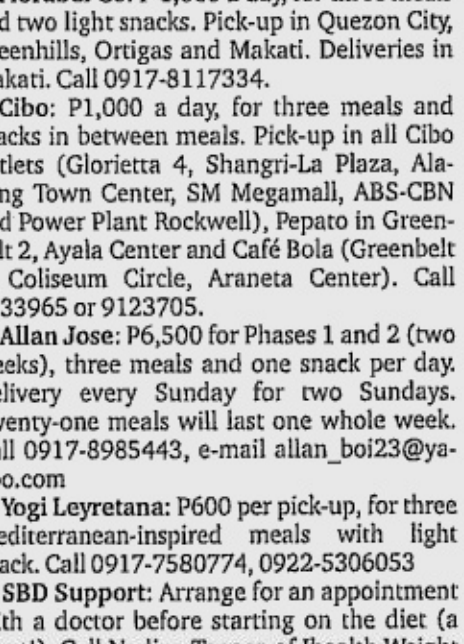
Allan Jose: P6,500 for Phases 1 and 2 (two weeks), three meals and one snack per day. Delivery every Sunday for two Sundays. Twenty-one meals will last one whole week. Call 0917-8985443, e-mail allan_boi23@yahoo.com

Yogi Leyretana: P600 per pick-up, for three Mediterranean-inspired meals with light snack. Call 0917-7580774, 0922-5306053

SBD Support: Arrange for an appointment with a doctor before starting on the diet (a must!). Call Nadine Tengco of Ihealth Weight Management 0917-2044356.

Make time for "one sumptuous Sunday lunch" in South Beach-friendly restos like Café Bola (757BOLA) or Brazil, Brazil at The Power Plant Mall (8990957).

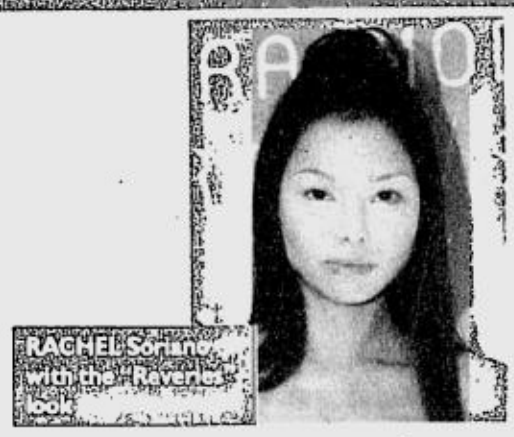
Subscribe to southbeachdiet.com, with membership. Perks include weight tracker, Nutrition Tool and Meal Planner.



THE SB bible

KAKUYASU Uchiide and his Impressionist masterpiece

After the storm



RACHEL Sorlano with the "Raven" look

All went straight to their favorite party jaunts and treated themselves to a post-storm blow-out

WITH the scene in full swing—what with the daily grind of events and happenings that characterize the Christmas rush—even typhoon Yoyong had to blow his winds somewhere else.

Party denizens will always look for a hot happening to keep them warm in this season of chilled everything. But I am happy to point out that people have a conscience and still do their part for the underprivileged others.

Tim Yap

A good percentage of party people went around soliciting donations for the victims of the typhoons. At Government, dance club demimondes were giving donations to ABS-CBN's Bantay Kalikasan Foundation right after they partied the night away. Now, isn't that the right way to celebrate?

At the height of the storms, BMW canceled the launching of its One Series at The Fort. Gucci also postponed its event. But the NU107 Rock Awards still pushed through. Oh well, rockers will be rockers. And NU107 made sure the World Trade Center was packed with Red Horse-chugging folks who head-banged to Bamboo and cheered or jeered the rock stars.

Bench launched its "Bench Time," its version of beautifully crafted metal watch-works at Glorietta. Rustan's launched Ermenegildo Zegna's new boutique and gave away neckties (expensive giveaways, but who are we to complain?).

Pretty, pretty

Pretty Fit and Beetle Bug had a reason to celebrate. They opened two new stores—one at the Alabang Town Center, and another in Shangri-La Plaza (their flagship is at Glorietta).

"I love Pretty Fit!" I overheard a couple of trendies who thought they looked like Manolos. M Café overflowed with martinis, Cibo's **Margarita Fores** made sure everyone was warm with a chocolate fondue station.

Pretty Fit owners **Linda Tan** and **Jennie Chua** donated to the storm victims. Now that's a really pretty thing to do.

A day before the storm, everything seemed fine. I even woke up early for a lunch affair, one that my buddy **Tina Tinio** was hosting for Shu Uemura's chief make-up artist from Tokyo, **Kakuyasu Uchiide**.

Now, I do not need any makeup tips, so I just savored the great company of cosmetics aficionados who all paid attention to Uchiide San as if he was Einstein giving a lecture on the theory of relativity.

Brand managers and beauty editors never cease to amaze me. They always look fresh and perky. In a way, they are their brand's best image models.

But before getting the right endorser, one must hire the right product manager. So I think Tina is the brand manager's brand manager. Just watching her walk the walk and talk the talk (Shu Uemura is in her every other deep-breathed sentence) would reveal to one why Shu Uemura has become the number one brand here in our shores.

Outside the beauty industry, the day after the storm, everybody seemed to have missed going out that all went straight to their favorite party jaunts and treated themselves a post-storm blow-out.

From Greenbelt to Eastwood, the place was packed with partyphiles all out to paint the town with their favorite color.

Temple was particularly packed, with Fridays being the top pick of the week for R&B crazy kids ready to dance the night away.

If you think these past few weekends were crazy, then think again. It's just the beginning. The Christmas season is upon us (as if I had to tell you) so brace yourselves for a super-duper blast.

Speaking of Christmas, for those who are in dire need of gifts, here's a suggestion. Instead of giving gifts that are bound to be recycled (or fruit cake, for that matter), why don't you just give "personal gift certificates?" These are GCs issued by yourself to different people, with the amount varying in terms of how well you love your friend.

It goes like this: "This certificate is issued to Jane de la Cruz from **Tim Yap**. Bearer of this gift certificate is entitled to a free hug/ movie/massage/cell phone of her choice/ shopping spree/ trip around the world ... "

Try it, it's personalized, and all you need to do is make a printout from your PC and send it out in a nice envelope.

Have a Super! season ahead.

Shopaholics, unite!

For those of you who want to buy and buy—the buy-curious I call them—check out my favorite shopping buddy's new show on the Lifestyle Network.

Jenni Epperson lets the fashion can out of the bag and spills the magic shopping beans on the best buys in the show "Good Finds" starting tomorrow at 8:30 p.m. with replays on Saturdays, at 2 p.m., on Sky Cable channel 30 and Home Cable channel 26. Catch it, and just shop, shop, shop!

THE CHRISTMAS look any Filipina can achieve: Chic and Rouge

METRO's Tina Tinio and Shu Uemura's Robbie Piner

SHU Uemura brand manager Tina Tinio and L'Oreal Philippines managing director David Enns

GMA-7's Jill [illegible]

L'OREAL'S Cessie Cobayco and Anton Mendoza

JUST SHOPPERS: Jenni Epperson and Kat Cruz

MARCO Antonio

METRO's David Nuyda and Smart's Jill Caroline

ABS-CBN Philippines Chief Operating Officer Charo Santos-Concio

JACKIE Cohen, Antonio and Heidi Ng

SHU Uemura Philippines chief make-up artist Xiery Zulueta and Nonoy Gaviola

DESIGNERS Ignacio Leyva and Tina Daniac with Kristalia

MYNZA Sison and Mary Bonifacio

L'OREAL'S Cessie Cobayco and Anton Mendoza

RHETT Eala and Tessa Prieto-Valdes

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Ham: Lovingly homemade—a great alternative to overly commercial Christmas hams. P150/kilo, Good Food (tel. 6451271—Baby Salumbides; 90 Sta. Ana Ext. St., Marikina East Subd., San Roque, Marikina City)

Food for the gods: Rich and chewy, loaded with nuts. P180/box of 10, Nola Desserts (0917-8312238, 0922-4733637 or 721-5360—Leony)

Fruit cake: The ultimate Christmas staple. P200 (small), Seasonal Favorites (0920-9604300)

Carrot cake: Moist and delicious, topped with cream-cheese frosting. P350 (nine inches), Nola Desserts (0922-4733637); P175 (small), Seasonal Favorites (0920-9604300)

Valrhona chocolate cake: Made from the finest French chocolate. P80/individual size, P800/8", Reggie's (6344812, 0917 539-2667, or e-mail reg_espi@yahoo. com)

Lemon Squares: Tasty and tangy citrus bars. About P65/small box. Box may be combination of fudge and butterscotch brownies. AnnieBee (0919-723 1865)

Date Walnut Bars: Indulgence in a bar. P95/box of six, Daddy Bakes (7264707, 7215566)

Cheesecake: Truly divine. P370/ Sampler Box of six mini cups, P380 (9"). Flavors are Oreo, Blueberry, Classic and Vanilla, order from Just Craving (0917-8334100)

Apple Cake: Rich and packed with apple goodness. P125 from Lucille Vasquez- Chipongan (3730395 or 9421113)

Chocolate cake: Topped with rich chocolate shavings. P700, Beanhoppers, Robinsons-Novaliches

Butterscotch brownies: You can't restrain the urge to pop these chewy delights into your mouth. P50/box of eight, P100/box of 12. May be ordered along with yummy fudgy brownies, Casa de Maria (2599637 or 0918-6988376)

Crinkles: A luscious piece of bliss. P30/pack of 10, Chunks of Euphoria (9311301 or 0920-9023864)

Toblerone Delight Bar: A delectable blend of cream cheese and chocolate. P280/box of 24, Nola Desserts (0922-4733637; www.noladesserts.tk)

Brownies: Divinely melts in your mouth. P95/ box of six, 3x1.5" brownies. Daddy Bakes (Call 0918-4427902 or 726-4707—Ji Reyes; 0916-5573973, 72155—Lindy Benedicto). Brownies also available from Casa de Maria, Chunks of Euphoria, AnnieBee

Goodie giveaways

Spread some Christmas cheer with these non-traditional takes on traditional goodies

Text and Photos by Zee Castro
2bu! Correspondent

SOME perceive Christmas treats as gifts as generic. But these little indulgences amid the holiday hum definitely wouldn't go unappreciated.

Cinnamon roll: A great substitute to overpriced mall-based cinnamon rolls. P12/piece or P144/box of 12, Araullo Pastries (34 Scout de Guia, QC; 3732777 or 0917- 8110413)

Banana chocolate chip muffins: Moist and delicious up to the last bite. P220/box of 12, Just Craving (09178334100; http://justcraving.blogspot.com)

Mariposa: These butterfly-shaped treats are great with coffee. About P60/pack. Araullo Pastries (3732777), and Lucille Vasquez-Chipongan (3730395)

Banana bread: You get the entire loaf for the price of three café-bought slices. P120, Seasonal Favorites (0920-960 4300)

Cookies: Order from Nola Desserts, and Lucille Vasquez-Chipongan (Chocochunk Cookies P90/pack of 10).

All products come in pretty Christmas packaging. Remember to order at least four days in advance. Inquire about discounted prices they may offer if you buy in bulk.

The biggest obstacle, however, is resisting the urge to just gobble up these treats yourself instead of spreading the gift-giving love around.

E-mail the author at zeecastro@yahoo.com

2bU! guide to tried-and-tested holiday treats

HERE are more delicious and affordable Christmas goodies that have that noncommercial, homemade taste.

If you plan to bring these treats to the season's get-together, please resist the urge to pass them off as your own creations.

Bellicious Cookies (tel. 0918-2710067): chunky oatmeal cookies (with choice of walnut or chocolate chips), cranberry cookies, white chocolate chip cookies.

Classic Confections (7462773; 0917-5245822): Mocha sans rival, Lemon torte, Rum cake, Oreo cheesecake, Banana cream pie.

Ginquelrus (3717308, 0917-3220926): Food for the gods, Banana cashew loaf, Classic cheese cupcake.

Flour Power (0917-9267930): Fruit cake, Carrot cake with cream cheese frosting, Super fudge brownie bars.

French Kiss (5318700, 0917-5413868, www.frenchkisspastries.com): sugar-free specialty

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Hong Kong WinterFest 26 Nov 2004 - 02 Jan 2005

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- Mosquito nets
- Slippers
- Clothes
- Candles, matches, flashlight
- Water Container (Jerry Cans)

Medicines:
- Vitamin C, Oral Rehydration Salts , Water Purifying Tablets, Paracetamol

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Tel Nos.: 563-7321, 563-7313, 564-4480
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IN A RICE-EATING country like the Philippines, French Baker has introduced quality and affordable European-inspired breads and pastries into the Filipino dining fare. Here are its top five products:

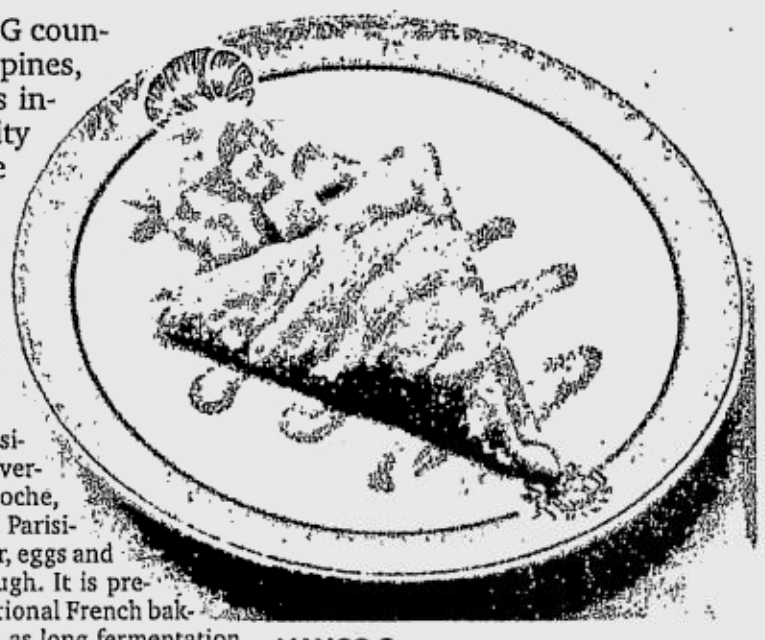
1. Cheese Parisienne—the Manila version of French Brioche, French Baker Cheese Parisienne uses fresh butter, eggs and sugar for its rich dough. It is prepared using the traditional French baking technique known as long fermentation. It has generous servings of French butter icing and mouthwatering grated cheese on top.

2. Muffins—varieties include blueberry, peach, cinnamon nut, lemon poppy seed, mocha walnut, and orange almond—aside from the basic cheese and choco.

3. Scones—a light, plain cake, quickly made and containing very little fat, and is usually eaten split open and spread with butter or a filling. French Baker also has scones in walnut and chocolate-chip variants.

4. Almond Croissant—the French croissant given a twist. The Frangipane cream on top with almond flakes can become a perfect afternoon tea party for two.

5. Crepes—also one of French Bakers must-tries. Freshly-prepared crepes in ham and cheese, apple cinnamon whipped cream, blueberry whipped cream, mango whipped cream, hazel nut choco or banana chocolate.



MANGO Crepe

SCONES

26 guide to tried and tested holiday treats

From page I3

cakes, Chocolate Lust, Cloud Cake, Tiramisu

Kitchen's Best (5756012, 8120908): decadent cake with caramel sauce, lemon square, peanut butter bars, sugar-free fudgey walnut brownies.

Mrs. Howards (3734884, 4121682): *burgito* buns (herbed buns), baby cakes, cinnabites, macaroons

The Cookery (6350351, 0917-8122354): banoffee pie, petite vanilla bean panna cotta with fresh strawberries, petite ultimate chocolate cake.

Tita Lenn's (6313450, 6371448): *ube ensaymaditas*, buco lychees salad, cinnamon roll, *inipit*.

Zee Castro and Anne Rose Elicano

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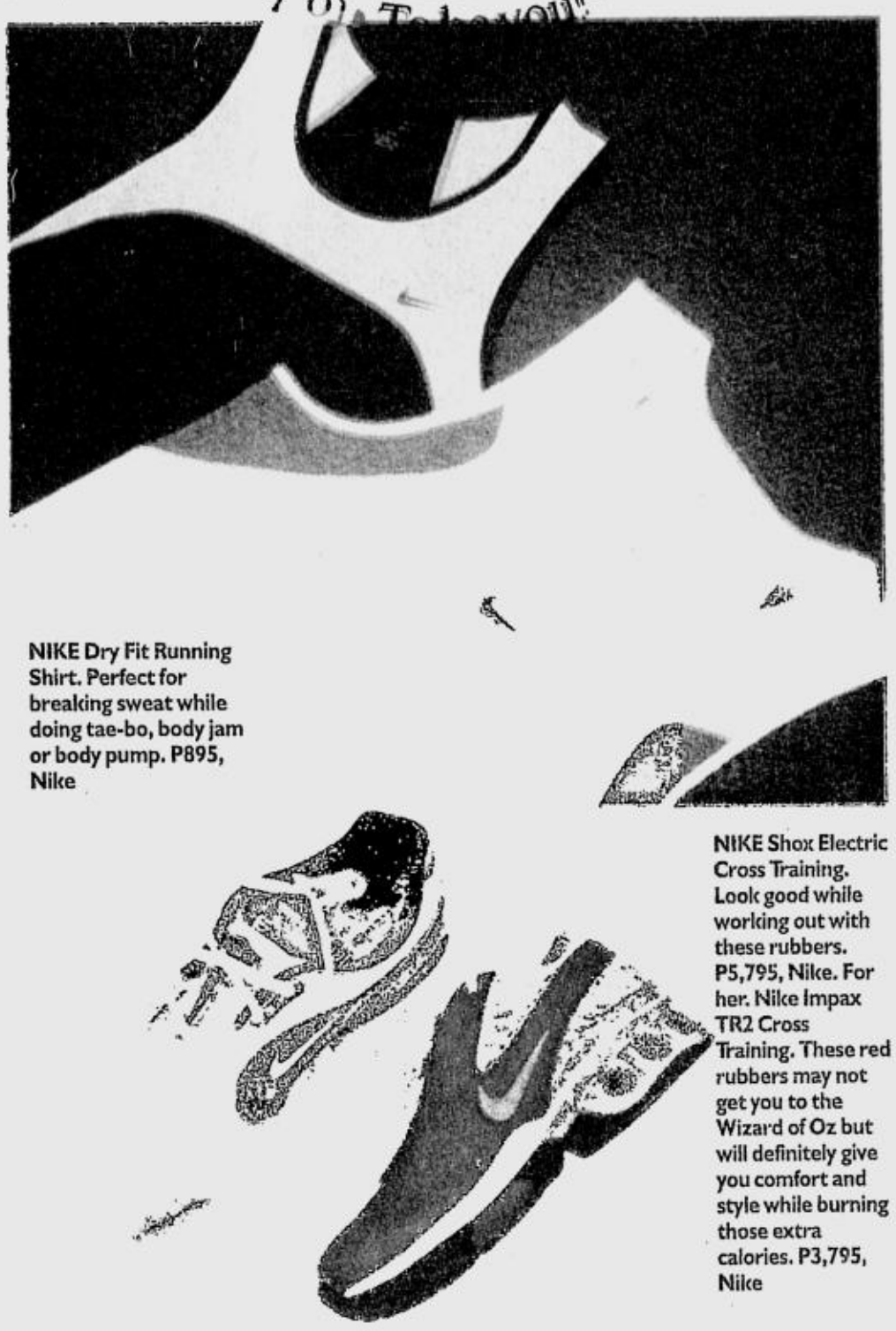
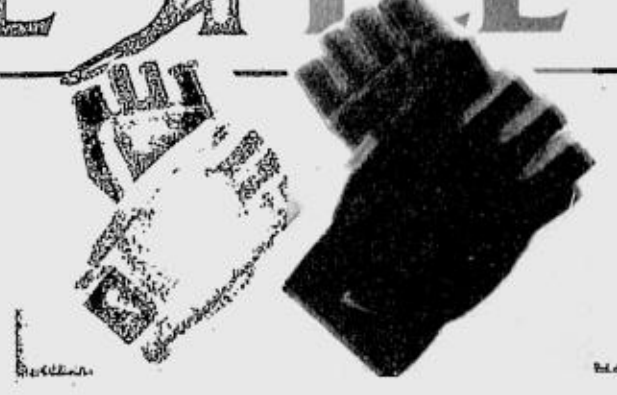


NIKE Dry Fit Running Shirt. Perfect for breaking sweat while doing tae-bo, body jam or body pump. P895, Nike

NIKE Shox Electric Cross Training. Look good while working out with these rubbers. P5,795, Nike. For her. Nike Impax TR2 Cross Training. These red rubbers may not get you to the Wizard of Oz but will definitely give you comfort and style while burning those extra calories. P3,795, Nike



FOR HIM. Nike Performance Training Gloves. For better weight grip while working out. P695, Nike. For her. Nike Lightweight Training Glove. To prevent those soft and silky hands from getting callused. P645, Nike

jingle bar-bells

Gym junkies require more than the usual weights and machines

Text and photos by
JR Victorio
2bU! Correspondent

A PERSON that simply lifts a rusty old concrete barbell does not a gym junkie make. Working out is not simply a pastime or an excuse to stalk your crush, but a lifestyle. It requires passion for fitness and every discipline that goes with it.

And a gym junkie takes great effort to follow strict diets and to own necessary gym accessories. He or she may also be involved in a sport or two.

This Christmas, give a gift that a gym buff will surely appreciate. No, not a fruitcake or a fattening box of brownies! Here's a bulging list. If you don't have the money for any gift, why, offer a good neck and shoulder massage instead.

E-mail the author at jr_victorio@yahoo.com

JINGLE/J4

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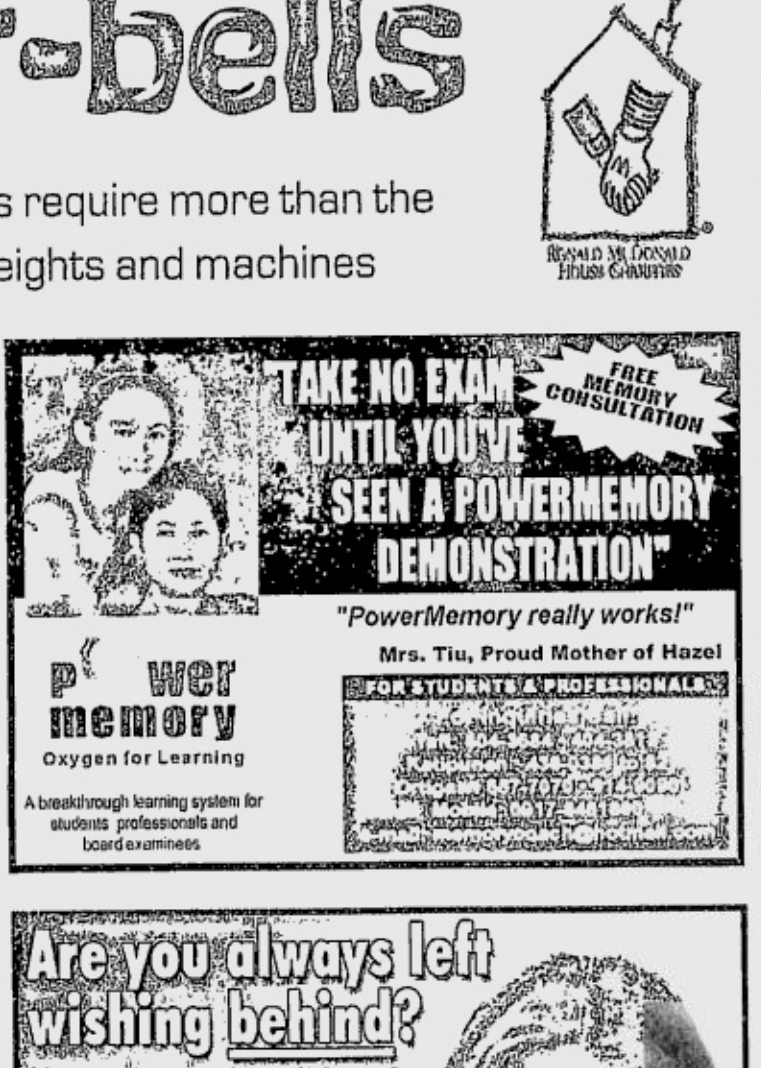

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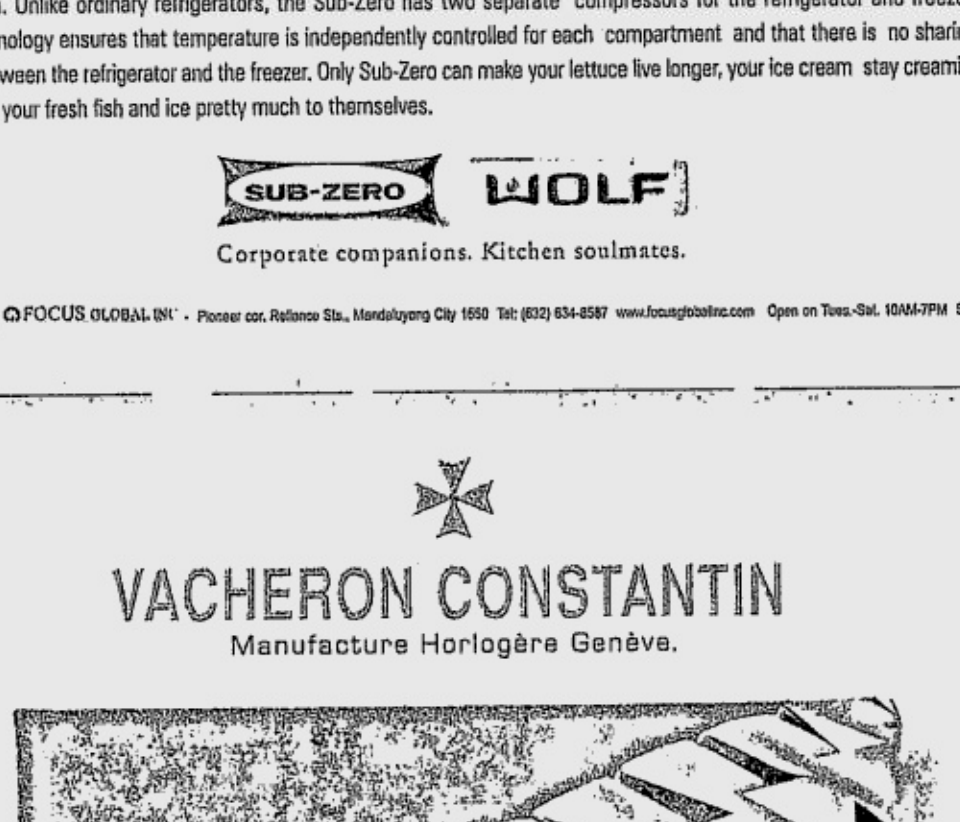

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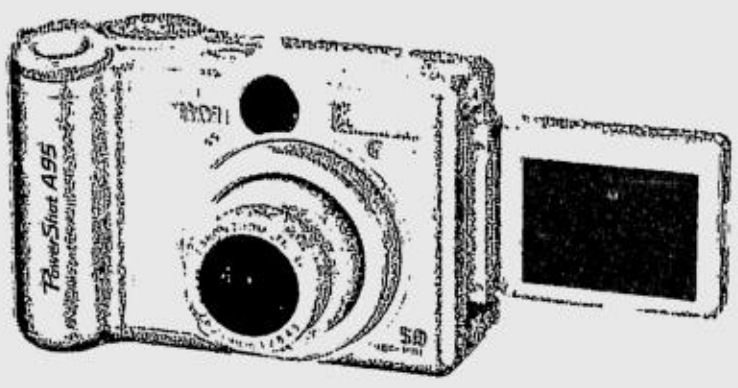
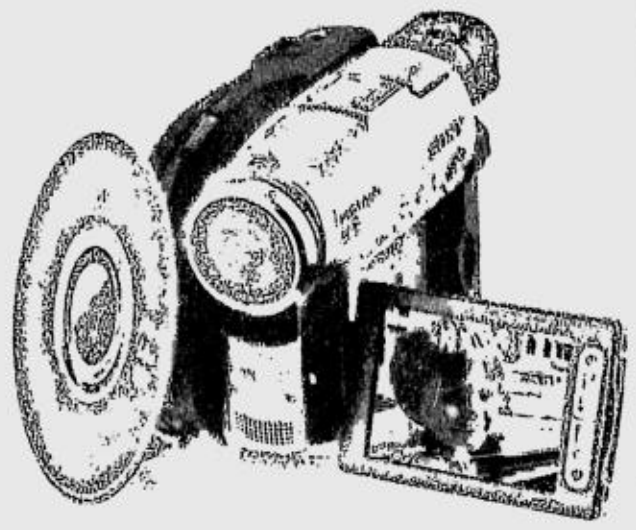


CANON POWERSHOT A95
Are film cameras going the way of the dodo? Who knows? But it's wise to invest in a good digicam nevertheless. Entry-level photographers, hobbyists and more-experienced shooters alike will revel in the versatile features that the Canon PowerShot A95. Packed in its ergonomically designed body are a sophisticated five-megapixel CCD, 12x combined zoom, and a host of other advanced shooting and convenience features.

SONY ERICSSON K700I
It's not every day that you chance upon a mobile phone that appeals to both consumers and business users alike. But the Japanese-Swedish phone maker has whipped up its magic and come up with the tri-band Sony Ericsson K700i. It's got everything to suit your multimedia needs: a VGA still and video camera, Bluetooth, an FM radio, MP3 player and a massive 40MB of memory.



SONY DCR-DVD201 HANDYCAM
Whether you're a budding filmmaker or a proud parent who simply wants to capture your baby's "firsts," you'll find value in the DCR-DVD201 Handycam from Sony. With it you can record directly onto three-inch DVD-R and DVD-RW at resolutions comparable to MiniDV. You can even capture still Jpeg images up to a maximum resolution of 1152 x 864 thanks to its one-megapixel CCD imager.

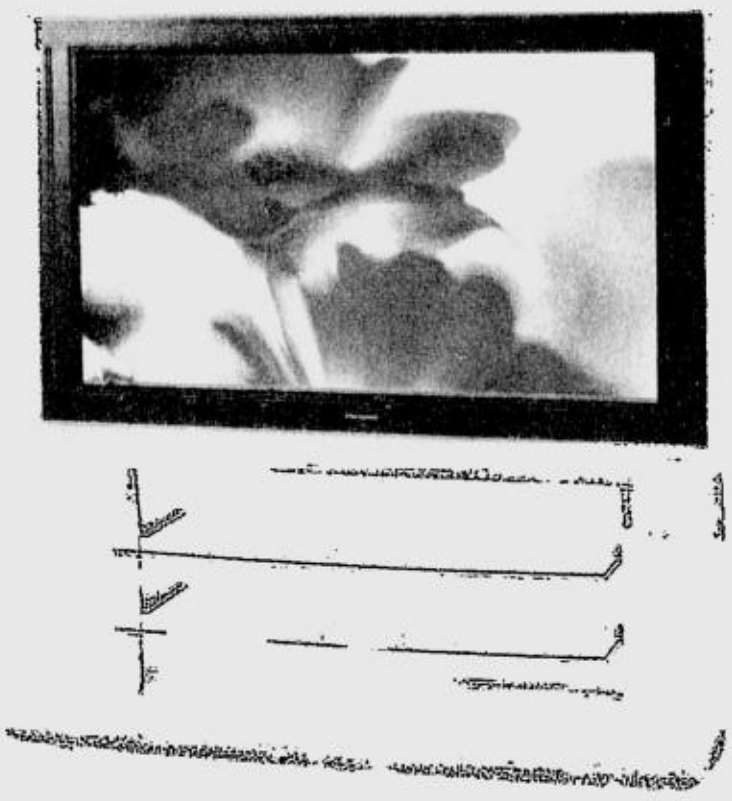
Gadget freaks, rejoice!

By Katrina Rivera
Contributor

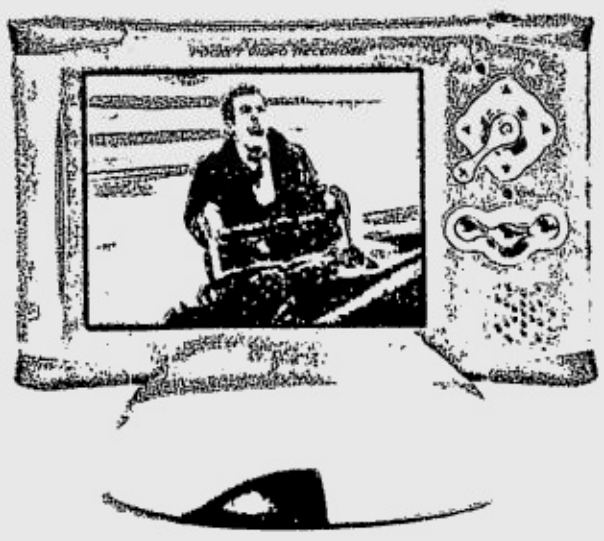
See the priceless looks on your loved ones' faces when they find these toys under the Christmas tree

FORGET about giving ordinary gifts this Christmas. Make the season more special by giving your old friend and relative that six-megapixel digicam, 40" ultra-thin plasma display or camera phone they've been eyeing for quite a while. Oh, but with the [illegible] money, you'll do it.

The author is the assistant executive editor of Speed Magazine.



PANASONIC VIERA
Does your entertainment (or living) room need a little livening up? Why not decorate your space with a sleek and stylish flat-panel plasma display such as the Panasonic Viera? This High Definition plasma TV features state-of-the-art technology that will surely perk up your home-viewing nights.

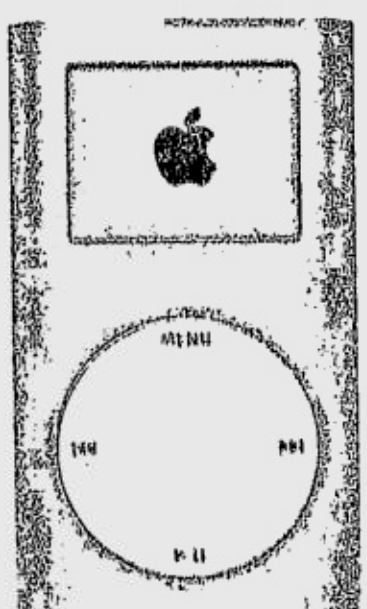


ARCHOS AV400
Ever dreamed of watching "Sex and the City" or "Friends" on your way to school or work? Techie mobile warriors will delight in the Archos AV400, a personal digital video recorder that lets you watch film and TV content anytime, anywhere. At last, you don't have to be left out in the cold not knowing who Carrie Bradshaw ends up with.

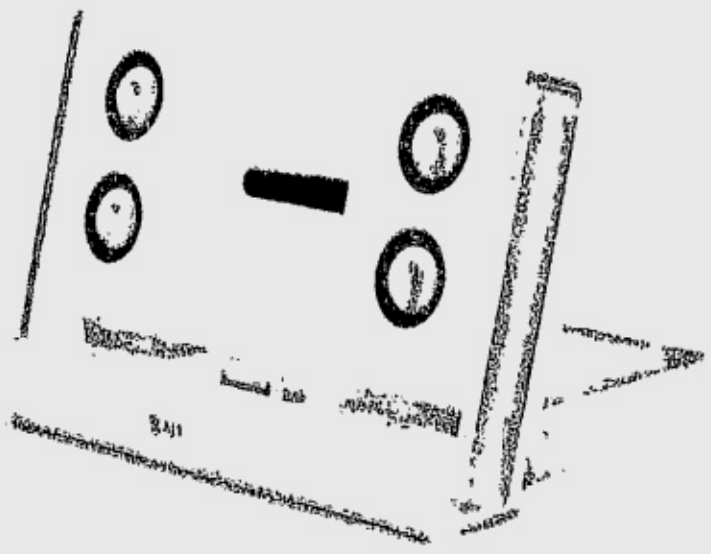
HP PAVILION DV1000
The HP Pavilion dv1000 lives up to its name, "Entertainment Notebook PC." A standalone DVD player as well as a laptop, it plays movies or music CDs at the press of a button. It even has an optional remote that lets users control the action from up to 10 feet away. A multitasking marvel for a multitasking person.

NOKIA 7260
The striking design. The bold pattern. The sleekly flamboyant silvery Art Deco highlights. This Nokia 7260 fashion phone oozes character and confidence. And it's not just all looks, mind you. It's got features such as tri-band connectivity, VGA camera and, yep, a shoe-and-clothes size converter. This phone surely makes for an interesting conversation piece.

TAYLORMADE R5
Your dad tells you he desperately needs a large, forgiving, confidence-inducing driver. Don't give him a blank stare. He may be hinting about TaylorMade's new r5 dual Type D and r5 dual Type N, the most forgiving drivers that TaylorMade has ever engineered. Each boasts an extraordinarily high movement of inertia that delivers exceptional stability for dramatically better results on off-center hits. Tee off!



APPLE IPOD MINI
The 4GB Apple iPod Mini carries on the tradition of the iPod brand with its fashionable, intelligent design. This teenie-weenie hard drive disk player holds about 74 hours' worth of music and shares the same impressive graphical interface and sound specs as its larger sibling. Everything you love about the iPod in a tiny eye candy package. And it comes in five flav... er, colors! Perfect for fashionista audiophiles.



ALTEC LANSING INMOTION
It's the season of giving and sharing, so don't keep your vast music library to yourself. Dock your beloved iPod, unplug those ubiquitous earphones and power on the paperback-sized Altec Lansing inMotion speakers. Party the night away!

A merry comic-book Christmas

By Adrian Dy
2bU! Correspondent

FOR THE Marvel zombie: Astonishing X-Men 1-6

Perhaps the best comic put out by Marvel this year. Buffy and Angel creator Joss Whedon hit all the right chords and John Cassaday made all those chords look extremely pretty. Between a cure for the mutant gene, rampant in-fighting and the return of a fan favorite character, the X-Men seemed more real and looked more real, too. A definite "can't miss" for Marvel fans and a "must-have" for anyone in the key of X.

For the Johnny DC: Identity Crisis 1-7

It started with the murder of a one superhero's wife, and, from there, it just grew and grew. In what could be the largest status quo-changing event since, well, Crisis on Infinite Earths, New York Times best-selling author Brad Meltzer has put together a murder mystery to boggle the mind, with repercussions that span the entire DC Universe. Sharp pencils by Rags Morales and covers by Michael Turner give this mini-series some serious eye candy. The fact, too, that this sets the foundation for a very large summer event next year for DC, all equal a gift no DC fan should spend Christmas without.

For the guy who would rather watch comics: "Spider-man 2" DVD

Bar none, the best superhero movie ever (sorry "Superman"), and very much up there on the list of best sequels ever. "Spider-man 2" was just a roller-coaster ride of action and emotion, everything that made the character such a hit when he first debuted in the pages of Amazing Fantasy. A certified box-office hit and beloved by comic fans worldwide, the DVD is also jam-packed with all those little features that make the format so interesting. It's something a non-comic fan will definitely appreciate as well.

RUNAWAYS

"SPIDER-MAN 2" DVD

For fans of O.C., Smallville and One Tree Hill: Runaways Volume 1: Pride and Joy

It's just too easy to imagine Runaways as WB's next "it" show. Start with the teens from "Dawson's Creek," toss in the superpowers of "Smallville" and mix with a dash of mutants from the "Marvel Universe," and you have Runaways. When six teens discover that their parents are actually a group of super villains called the Pride, they go on the lam with the hope of making up for their parents' evil deeds by saving the world. A gripping plot and awesome dialogue by Brian K. Vaugh and animé-inspired art by Adrian Alphona, condensed into the portable and cheap Marvel Age digest format, makes this popular with the teens.

For the budding comic-book writer: The Powers Scriptbook

Ever wonder how a comic book is written? Well, Image Comics answers that here, by publishing the unedited scripts from the first two story arcs of the acclaimed hit Powers, written by Brian Michael Bendis and illustrated by Mike Oeming. Check out the art-less side of a normally visual medium, and when you're through with the book, do as the man himself, Bendis, mentions in the introduction: Write, write, write.

For the aspiring comic book know-it-all: The DC Comics Encyclopedia

Quick! When was the first comic book appearance of Lex Luthor? What color are the eyes of Green Lantern? How heavy is Batman? Who are the members of the spin-off team of Justice League, the Extreme Justice? Comprehensive being an understatement in this case, this encyclopedia is a worthy successor to the classic "Who's Who" series of DC. Fully illustrated and colored with not only the most famous, but also some obscure but no less interesting heroes and villains.

For those who deem themselves "mature readers": John Constantine, Hellblazer statue

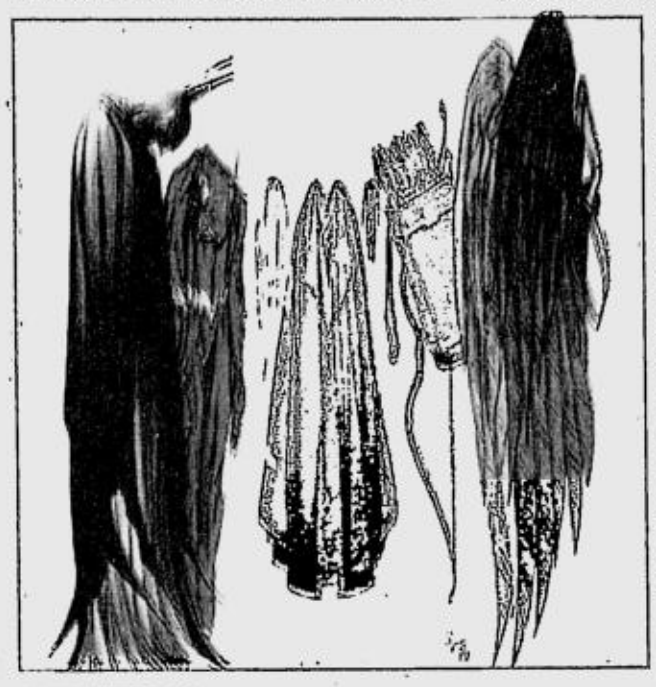
Perhaps the walking embodiment of the Vertigo line of comics after the Sandman, the perpetually bathed in bad luck, chain-smoking alcoholic of a black mage is set to hit the big screens soon with Keanu Reeves in the title role. Beat the rush by getting your friend this statue while the movie is still not in the theaters. Then sit back and watch as they smugly say to their other friends, "Oh yes, I was a fan long before the movie!"

For fans of "Alias," "The X-Files" and Jerry Bruckheimer flicks: Global Frequency: Planet Ablaze

Halfway between an urban myth and CIA is a group comprising 1,000 men and women dedicated to saving the world. Packed with some of the most innovative ideas from Warren Ellis, each issue in this collection is also illustrated by some of the best artists in the biz. More sci-fi than superheroes, with storylines such as an Ebola Virus bomb in London and a cyborg created by US military, Global Frequency is one of Ellis' best efforts so far and is a no-brainer for those that like their comics with a touch of more science and conspiracy.

For people growing up in the real world: Blankets

Make no mistake, this book is big, at a whopping 592 pages. Pretty appropriate for something that tackles all the big things in life such as love, religion, friendship and coming of age. Based on his own life, writer/artist Craig Thompson has produced a poignant and lyrical graphic novel about finding one's place in the world. Words barely describe his expressive pencils that churn out some of the best visual poetry ever known to man. Buy this for a loved one, and then do yourself a favor and buy one for yourself, too.



IDENTITY Crisis

If you're looking for the best: The Sandman Volume 1 Preludes and Nocturnes

Everything that a comic book should be can be found in the pages of Neil Gaiman's much-lauded Sandman series. The stories found in this book and in all the other volumes are so powerful, so groundbreaking that they may truly be the myths of our generation. Combining horror, fantasy and pure dream stuff, the Sandman is the series to get for people who have not had the chance to be charmed and have their eyes opened to a place beyond this waking world.

1.
- Make sure to buy Christmas lights of good quality to prevent accidents that could lead to fires.
- Choose the blinking Christmas lights, rather than the non-blinking ones, for they consume less electricity.
- Don't plug all your Christmas lights in one socket. Use multiple outlets.

2.
- Turn off and unplug all Christmas lights and "parols" before sleeping.
- For lights and decors outside your homes and offices, use only those designated for outdoor use.
- Use bulbs of lower wattage for your Christmas light fixtures so you can save on your electric bill.

3.
- Don't leave the Christmas tree switched on and candles lighted overnight to prevent fires.
- Keep flammable objects away from your Christmas tree. All incandescent light sources, no matter how small they are, produce heat and can cause fires.

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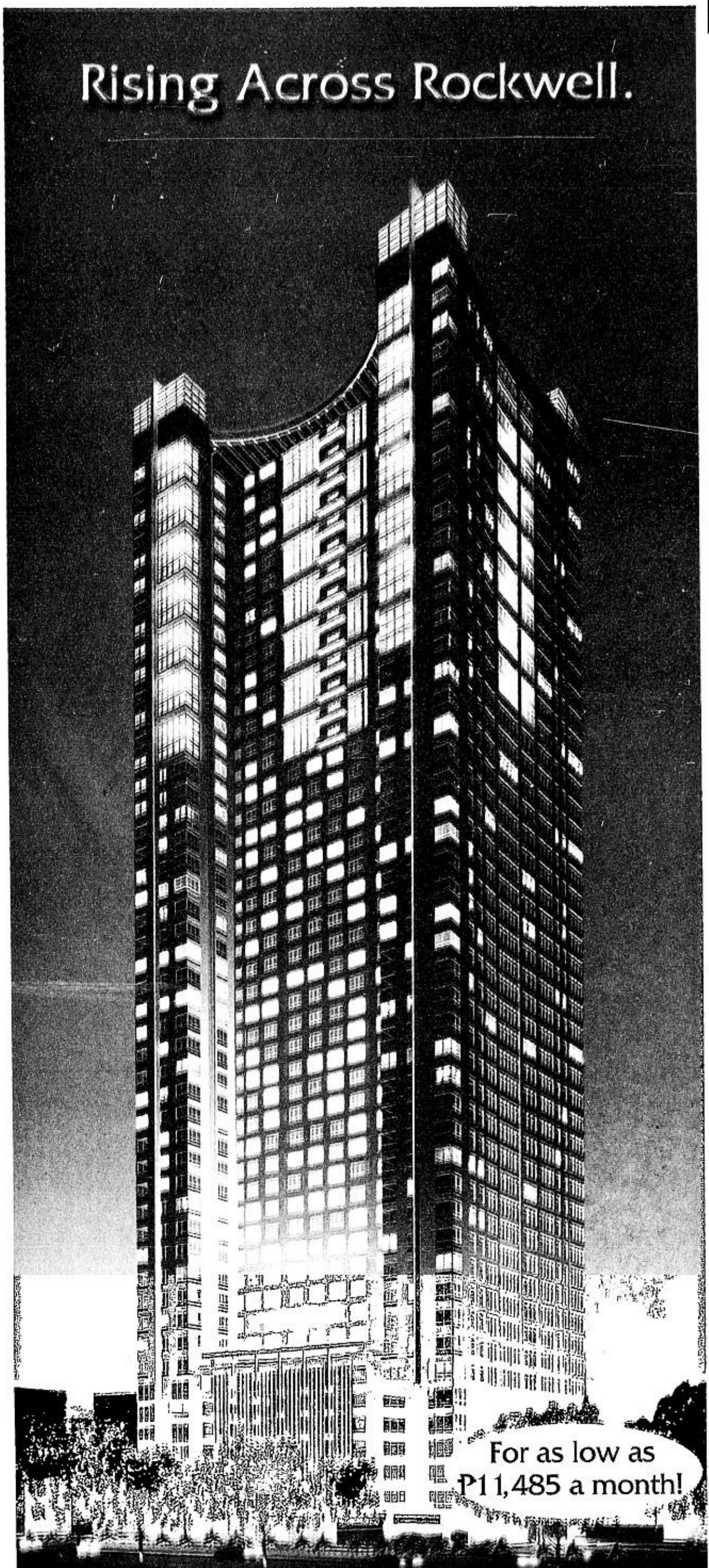

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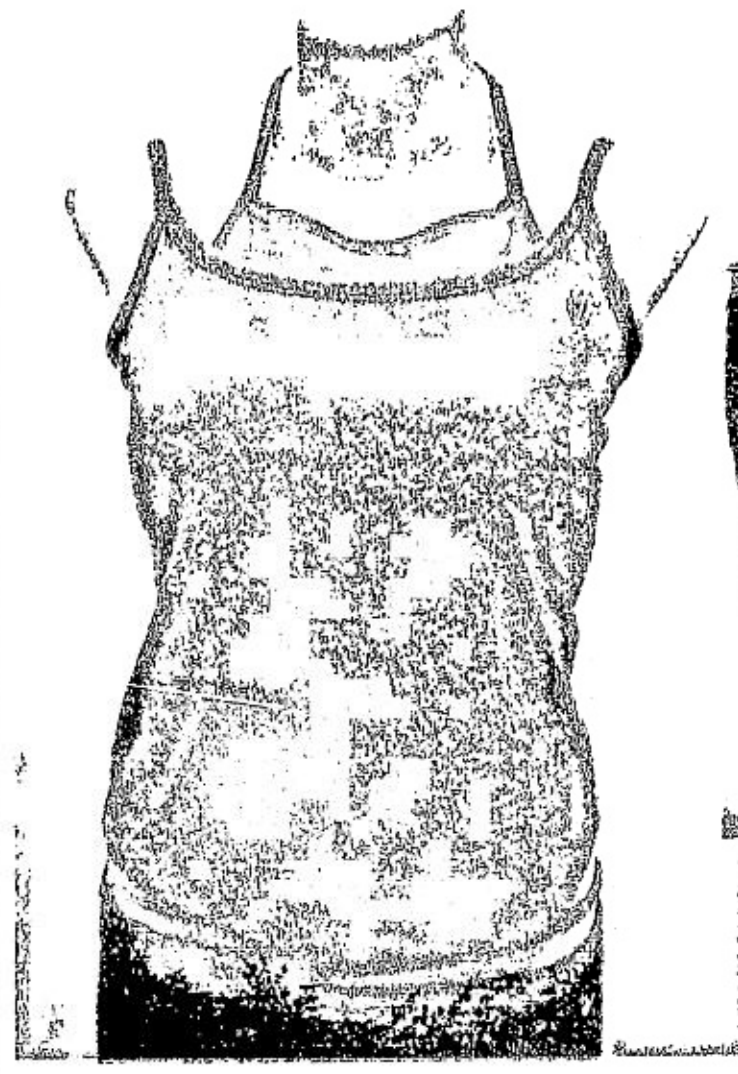
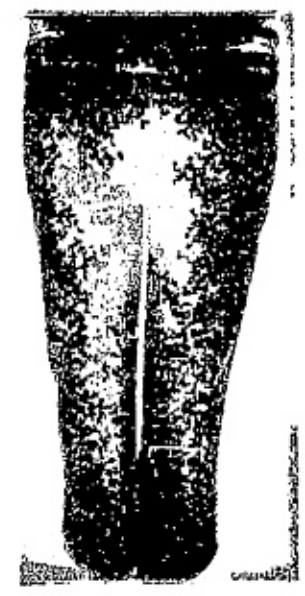
NIKE Strappy Mood Top. It doesn't change colors while your mood shifts, but it definitely puts you in the right workout mood. P1,495, Nike





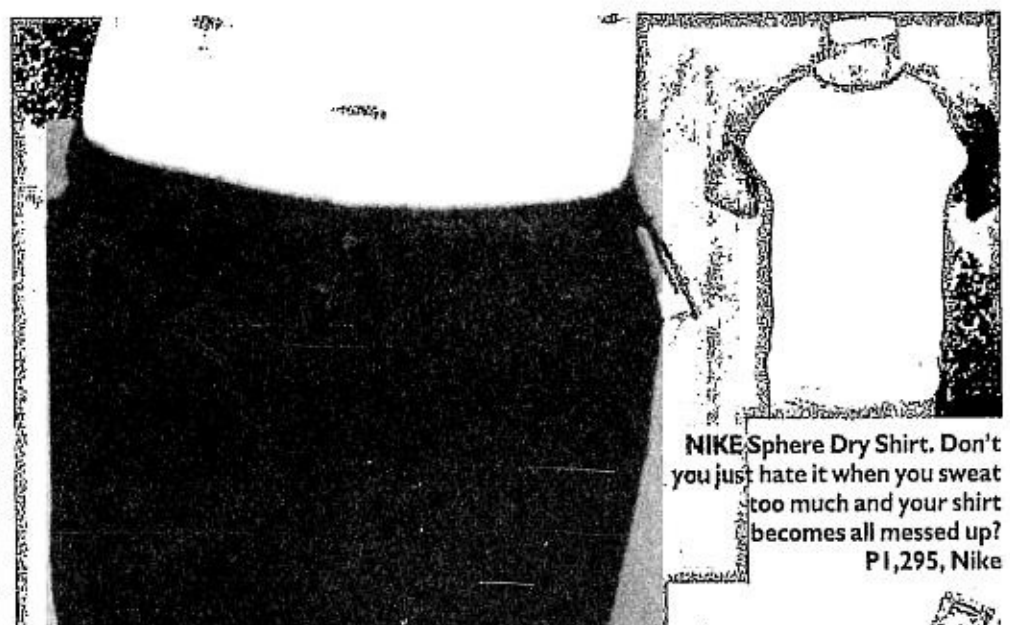
NIKE Zap Three Q Pants. Show off your fine figure with these hip-huggers. P1,695, Nike

NIKE Gym Bag. Now you can head straight to the gym from the office without changing your bag. Php 2,595, Nike

NIKE Sphere Dry (white) P1,395. Nike Tank Top (pink) P995, Nike

jingle bar-bells

From page J1



NIKE Sphere Dry Shirt. Don't you just hate it when you sweat too much and your shirt becomes all messed up? P1,295, Nike

NIKE Triax C8 Heart Rate Monitor Watch. Includes an ergonomic chest transmitter you strap onto your chest that sends ECG-accurate heart rate data to your watch. P6,800, L Time Studio

NIKE Gym Shorts. *Puruntong* shorts are not allowed in the gym, so get into these pair of shorts for comfort while working out. P1,595, Nike

UNLESS you can get away with grocery plastic bags in the gym, these gym necessities have enough space for those rubber shoes and other accessories. Backpack P1,295. Duffel Bag 1,595, Nike

ENTERTAINMENT Metro

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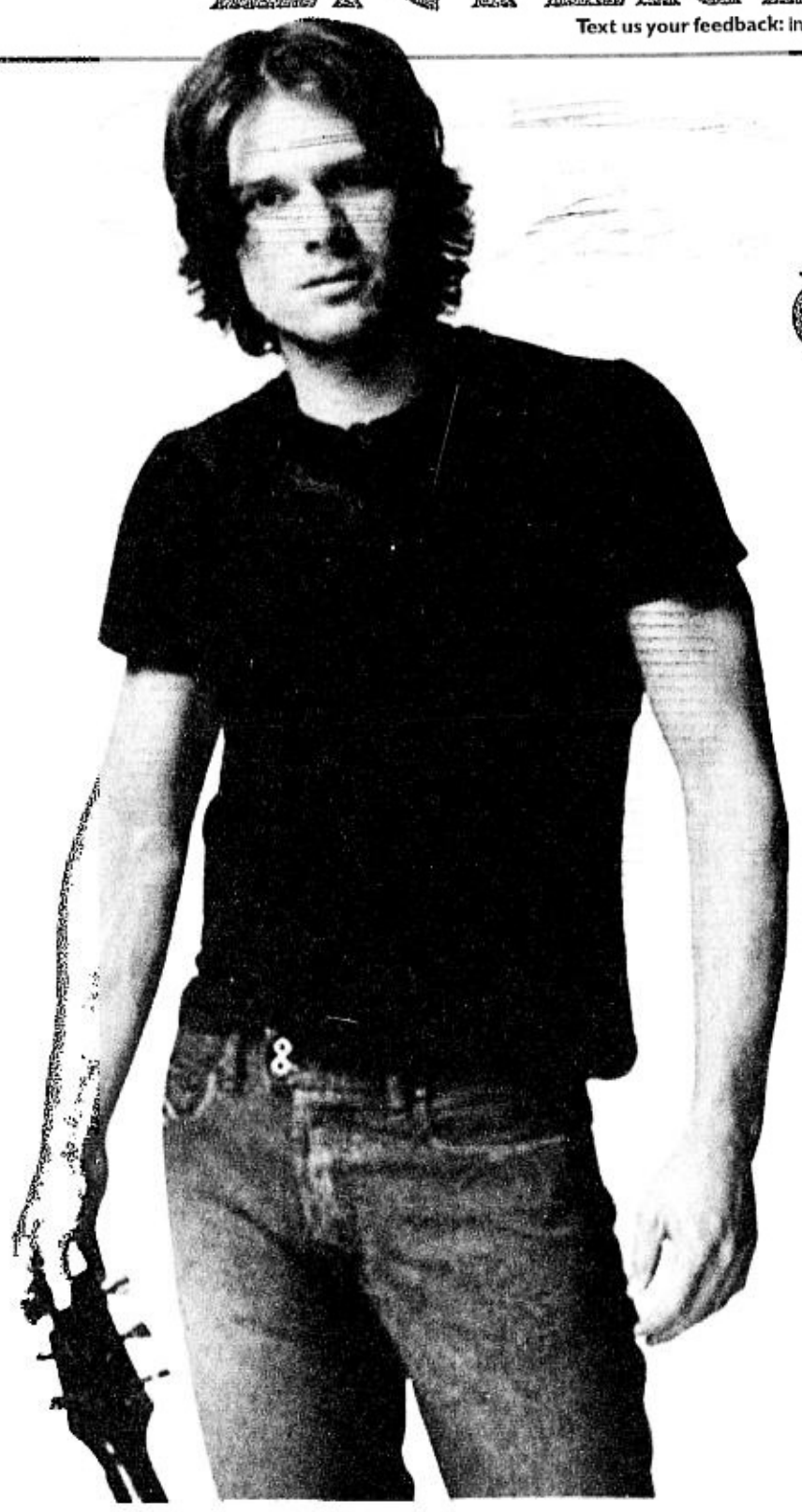
The pleasures of Joshua Payne



MUSE OF PAYNE. One of People Magazine's "Sexiest Men of 2004" gushes about the Philippines: "I could write here, I really, really could."

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

AMERICAN singer-songwriter Joshua Payne was in town recently for a hectic series of performances as part of his exclusive Philippine visit. He granted INQUIRER Entertainment a lively interview at his Makati Shangri-La Hotel room, two hours prior to his press lunch at the Glorietta's Hard Rock Café.

Comfortably clad in a gray tank top, jeans, and sneakers, Joshua energetically discussed, among other things, his debut album, his initial shock at being chosen as one of People Magazine's "Sexiest Men of 2004," and how the Philippines has become an instant muse to him.

The 31-year-old musician was visiting for only less than six days, but he admitted to feeling a strong connection to the country as soon as he got off the plane.

"It really is quite charming," he said. "The people are friendly and accepting of what I do, and I'm enjoying the time so far. I wish I had more time to walk around and check it out."

The Philippine weather, he admitted, took a little getting used to, but he didn't let it affect him or his work that much.

"It's humid," he noted. "My guitar doesn't handle that very well. It's a little harder to play, but my job is to get up there and do what I do.

"Being here is different in one regard: I'm finding that I really love the questions that I'm being asked. And the hospitality here is different from other places that I've been in the past. The people are great; they seem to be very loving.

"This place is so cool—The Philippines, it's got a vibe to it—I could write here. I really, really could."

Majored in girls

And he's always been the music-loving trooper. As a tyke, Joshua had a hearing defect that was corrected through an operation. His parents then bombarded him with diverse music.

"My mom was an opera singer," he related, "and my dad has a master's (degree) in music, so I never knew any different, you know? I would go to friends' houses and I found it odd that there wasn't music like there was in my place. We were always singing, always hearing some sort of music. They were always preparing something for some party," he relates.

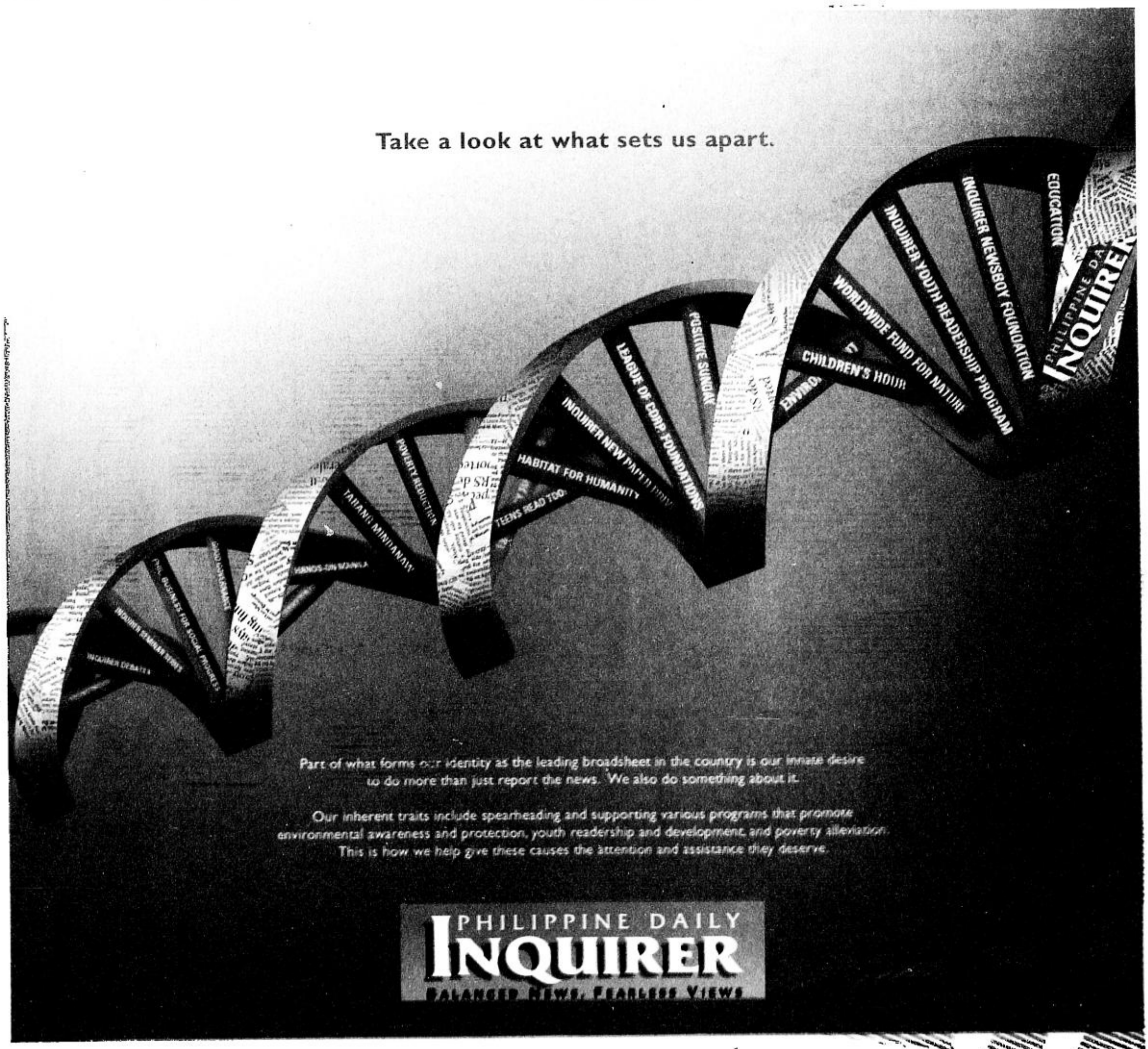
Singing became a part of him. He sang in school and church activities, and serenaded girls with popular power ballads. He adored and emulated artists such as Journey, U2 and Jim Croce. But college saw Joshua enjoying a football scholarship, a time when music wasn't really a definite career choice. He later sustained serious knee and shoulder injuries that took a long time to heal.

"I went to college to play football, and I majored in girls," he said. "I'll tell you what, it doesn't work. You can't make very good grades when you do that. And I got hurt—I was injured when I was playing ball—so that was not cool. I had to go home and regroup. And that's when I really started music again. I picked up the guitar that my dad bought the day I was born. Three years later I went back to school and majored in Music. I thought I was going to be an opera singer, but maybe I'll be an opera singer again someday."

Sports background

The transition from being an athlete to a full-fledged musician was tough, but it wasn't too radical for Joshua. "When football was gone, I

THE PLEASURES/ A2



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HAROLD AND KUMAR SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING

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SM Megamall Cinema 4	SM Bicutan Cinema 2	SM Manila Cinema 2

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SM Sucat Cinema 1	SM North Edsa Cinema 8	SM Bicutan Cinema 1	SM Megamall Cinema 9

NATIONAL TREASURE MTRCB RATING: G

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SM Fairview Cinema 6	SM Megamall Cinema 3	SM Southmall Cinema 3	SM Sucat Cinema 3

SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING **PA-SIYAM**

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2046 MTRCB RATING: R13 — SM Megamall Cinema 6 | SM Fairview Cinema 3

BRIDGET JONES 2 MTRCB RATING: PG 13 — SM Manila Cinema 10 | SM Sta. Mesa Cinema 4 | SM Sucat Cinema 4

GEORGE OF THE DRAGON SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING — SM Manila Cinema 11 | SM North Edsa Cinema 2 | SM Southmall Cinema 6 | SM Fairview Cinema 2

NED KELLY SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING — SM Sta. Mesa Cinema 8 | SM Southmall Cinema 6 | SM Fairview Cinema 4

ONE MISSED CALL MTRCB RATING: R13 — SM Megamall Cinema 11 | SM Manila Cinema 8 | SM Southmall Cinema 10 | SM Sta. Mesa Cinema 6 | SM Fairview Cinema 1 | SM Tutuban Cinema 4

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PAYNE'S PAIN. A relationship that fell apart inspired the song "My World"

The pleasures of Joshua Payne

From page A1

told somebody once, 'I was dying to find something that I was good at.' When I discovered music again—I got this voice teacher back in college, an incredible tenor—I was so excited to find a coach-player relationship. It was just like football, but he was the guy who said, 'Okay, here's the play, you go do it.' So that made the transition very easy. I understood that he was the expert in this field, and I needed to be the apprentice.

"If I hadn't had that sports background," he added, "I couldn't have been the go-getter. But I knew about the work ethic, so that really just let me go 'Boom!' and launch into that career. And it wasn't long until I was on top of my game."

He soon developed his already-fortified baritone and eventually toured with the University of Memphis' opera company.

Joshua Payne, however, was bound for a different kind of pain.

"If you listen to the song 'My World,' that's what happened," he said. "I was dating a girl, and the relationship fell apart. So with that, I lost all interest in music, and I was done with it. So I started working in construction and I opened a vintage clothing store.

"But music would remember and it found me again. I'd always written songs like ballads and James Taylor kind of stuff, but it was at that time I sort of became the troubadour, and opera went by the wayside."

What's inside of him

The culmination of his angsts and joys, his debut album "Your Love, My World," is his "take on pop music." He dispelled the notion that his guitar is just a press photo prop. He ran to his bedroom and returns to play a stanza from his own composition, "The Moon."

"When I started writing that tune, I heard this line, 'I love the moon and all its phases,'" he said after singing. "And I just went, 'Holy mackerel, that's a song!' so I wrote that down, and it was two years before I went back to it. I thought, that sounds really old-fashioned to me. I said, 'I'm gonna use old-fashioned language and I'm gonna set out to write a kind of old pop standard. That was the style. I really wanted to do that."

Writing his songs in his distinct fashion requires bona fide inspiration: "In this process, I discovered what was inside of me. I said this before, and I guess it's the only way that I can say it. There is leitmotif inside of me."

He proceeds to mimic both Darth Vader's and Luke Skywalker's contrasting theme music from "Star Wars," composed by John Williams, to cite famous examples.

"I think it's the leitmotif of Joshua Payne, not to speak about myself in the third person, (but) you can hear that in the record," he said. "That sends me racing to find some way to scramble and get it out of me. And that's when the art comes. That's the muse, but it happens when I'm somewhere that is vibe-y."

'I'm in a magazine'

The newcomer still feels a tad shocked that he has

THE PLEASURES/ A3

New mom Julia...

From page A3-4

But Roberts told USA Today in an interview just before the birth that despite the scare, her pregnancy had not come complete with some of the more common miseries expectant mothers face.

"Never got sick," she said. "I've heard horror stories about people who have a sip of water and then throw up for four hours. But I come from hardy stock. I'm Southern," she told the paper.

Roberts is currently starring in two newly released movies, "Ocean's Twelve" and "Closer," both of which hit the screens around the time of her biggest production, the birth of her twins. *AFP*

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MOVIEGUIDE

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MANILA BAY CINEPLEX

PREMIERE THEATRE
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1 (00:01) NATIONAL TREASURE GP
2 (00:01) BRIDGET JONES PG13
3 (00:01) SPIDERMAN 2 GP
4 (00:01) SHREK 2 GP

SUPER CINERAMA CINERAMA COMPLEX RECTO tel 733.4236
Iselann
1 (00:01) BIRTH
2. ALEXANDER
3. NED KELLY
4. ONE MISSED CALL
5. SALAT

Gotesco Grand Central (Caloocan) tel 364.3781
1 RESERVE
2 RESERVE
3. RESERVE
4 (00:01) RESERVE
5 RESERVE
6 (00:01) RESERVE
7 (DTS) RESERVE
8 RESERVE
9 RESERVE

Berma Cinema (Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SALAT
2 SEED OF CHUCKY

Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (00:01) GINGER SNAP
2 NAGDADALAGA
3 SKY CAPTAIN
4 (DTS) SALAT

Filinvest

FESTIVAL CINEMA (Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (00:01) PA-SIYAM
2 (00:01) CHRISTMAS WITH A KRANKS
3 (DTS) POLAR EXPRESS
4 (00:01) (DTS) 2046
5 (00:01) (DOLBY) BIRTH
6 (00:01) (SDDS) NATIONAL TREASURE
7 (00:01) (DOLBY) ALEXANDER
8 (00:01) (SDDS) BCUZ OF U
9 (00:01) (SDDS) SEED OF CHUCKY
10 (00:01) (SDDS) BRIDGET JONES

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1 SEED OF CHUCKY
2 PASIYAM
3 SALAT

MARRIOTT Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 SEED OF CHUCKY
2 AFTER THE SUNSET
3 THE SIN
4 RESERVED

st rmall www.clickthecity.com.ph Movies (Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007
1 (00:01) POLAR EXPRESS
2 SANTA SANTITA

EASTWOOD CINEMAS (Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (00:01) SPIDERMAN:
2 (00:01) BRIDGET JONES DIARY 2
3 (00:01) THE INCREDIBLES
4 (00:01) SHREK 2

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MALL CINEREX tel. 911-3101 loc 8242 / 8281 / 838
3 (Dolby) ALEXANDER
4 (SDDS) HAROLD & KUMA
5 (DTS) BAD SANTA
6 (Dolby) HONE
7 (Dolby) BCUZ OF U

st rmall www.clickthecity.com.ph Movies (Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 SANTA SANTITA
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) NED KELLY
5 SALAT SA LIGAYA

METROPOLIS www.clickthecity.com.ph star (Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 HELLWOLF
2 SALAT SA LIGAYA
3 HONEY
4 SANTA SANTITA
5 (00:01) NED KELLY
6 BAD SANTA

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

The pleasures . . .

From page A2

gotten the attention of People Magazine recently. He thought he was being interviewed for a music article, while numerous staffers (about 15 women and a few men) were present during his appearance. He was later informed that he was chosen for its annual list of sexiest male celebrities, an achievement his parents are very proud of.

"Golly, I don't even think about it," he said, grinning. "I mean, I think, 'Oh, gosh, I'm in a magazine, and it's great publicity.' People are knowing—okay, cool!"

Joshua revealed that, no, he didn't secretly have the magazine framed on his wall, either. "I didn't even buy it. I said, 'Okay, I guess today's the day.' So I went into the grocery store and I flipped through it and there I was, and I read it. 'Maybe that'll sell some records.' I closed it up and I walked out the door."

He finds fame a bizarre thing, but he doesn't feel deeply affected by it. "I don't think I'm changing. If the world revolves around me, I feel like I'm just this constant thing. I'm thankful this didn't happen ten years ago. It's about character, and you develop that through the trials and the things that you go through. If that is intact, when everything around you shifts, it's not as weird as it could be.

"But yes, it is weird," he added, bursting into laughter.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

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MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE

QUEZON CITY

ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	SALAT SA LIGAYA
B	CLOSED
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

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PREMIERE THEATRE	NATIONAL TREASURE

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STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	HELL WOLF!
CINEMA-2	SALAT
CINEMA-3	SEED OF CHUCKY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	POLAR EXPRESS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-6	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-7	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-8	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ALEXANDER
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	ONE MISSED CALL
CINEMA-12	BIRTH
CINEMA-14	PASIYAM
CINEMA-15	BCUZ OF U

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

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(LAS PIÑAS)	BOURNE SUPREMACY
CINEMA-1	FENG SHUI
CINEMA-2	SECRET WINDOW
CINEMA-4	BANGKOK HAUNTED

UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL

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5 BAD SANTA 12:15 2:25 4:35 6:45 8:55
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7 BCUZ OF U 12:00 2:10 4:20 6:30 8:40
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Dec. 15 FEDEX vs. SLR
Dec. 25 DISNEY ON ICE 1pm/4:30pm/8pm
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Dec. 27 DISNEY ON ICE 2pm/6pm
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JOHNNY DEPP,, "Finding Neverland"

LIAM NEESON, "Kinsey"

IMELDA STAUNTON, "Vera Drake"

PAUL GIAMATI, "Sideways."

Oscars cut Golden Globe influence

BEVERLY HILLS, California—It's no secret that the nomination choices for the Golden Globes have helped define the field of Academy Awards contenders. This year, a fairly wide-open awards season has yet to produce clear front-runners.

Hollywood's uncertain awards picture will take on sharper focus when the nominations for the 62nd annual Golden Globes are announced Monday morning.

Golden Globes are handed out by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, a comparatively small group of about 90 reporters for overseas news outlets. Yet with a nationally televised awards ceremony on NBC and a solid knack for picking eventual Academy Awards winners, the Globes wield a fair amount of sway among the 5,800 Oscar voters.

SHOW TIME

Tighter time frame

The Globes last January correctly predicted eventual Oscar winners in all key categories, including best-picture champ "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" and actors Sean Penn, Charlize Theron, Tim Robbins and Renee Zellweger.

But this year, as with the 2003 season—when the Oscars were moved up a month to late February—the Globes will have a bit less influence because of a tighter awards time frame.

Globe winners used to be announced a few days before Oscar nomination ballots were due. That gave last-minute voters in the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences a chance to make their choices based on the Globe outcomes.

This time, Oscar nominations are due a day before the Jan. 16 presentation of the Globes. The Academy Awards show is Feb. 27.

Top contenders

Lead Golden Globe contenders this year include Martin Scorsese's epic Howard Hughes film biography "The Aviator"; Clint Eastwood's boxing drama "Million Dollar Baby"; Marc Forster's "Finding Neverland," about J.M. Barrie and the creation of "Peter Pan";

Joel Schumacher's musical "The Phantom of the Opera," adapted from Andrew Lloyd Webber's stage sensation; Alexander Payne's road-trip comedy "Sideways" and Bill Condon's "Kinsey," about sexuality researcher Alfred Kinsey.

Among top acting prospects are Jamie Foxx as singer Ray Charles in "Ray"; Leonardo DiCaprio as Hughes in "The Aviator"; Hilary Swank as a female boxer and Eastwood as her trainer in "Million Dollar Baby";

Johnny Depp as Barrie and Kate Winslet as his muse in "Finding Neverland"; Liam Neeson in the title role in "Kinsey"; Imelda Staunton as the title character in the abortion drama "Vera Drake" and Paul Giamatti as a loser in love in "Sideways."

The Globes feature 13 categories for film and 11 for television.

Unlike other major movie awards, the Globes have separate divisions for dramas and comedies or musicals in the best-picture and lead-acting categories. *AP*

'Ocean's Twelve' robs 'Treasure' of boffo power

LOS ANGELES—Movie audiences have gone from one robbery flick to another.

"Ocean's Twelve," the star-driven sequel to the theft caper "Ocean's Eleven," debuted with $40.9 million, stealing the top box office slot from the heist hit "National Treasure," which slipped to third place with $10 million, studio estimates showed Sunday.

"National Treasure," which held the No. 1 spot the three previous weekends, lifted its domestic total to $124.2 million.

"Blade: Trinity," the third in Wesley Snipes' vampire series, opened at No. 2 with $16.1 million. The franchise had lost much of its bite since "Blade II," which debuted with more than twice the revenue, $32.5 million, and opened as the No. 1 movie in March 2002.

Quirky tale

Playing in 3,290 theaters, "Ocean's Twelve" averaged a robust $12,426 per cinema, compared with $5,537 in 2,912 movie houses for "Blade: Trinity."

In limited release, Bill Murray's quirky oceanography tale "The Life Aquatic With Steve Zissou" opened strongly, taking in $114,000 at just two theaters in New York City and Los Angeles. The film expands on Christmas Day.

Hollywood revenues rose solidly, with the top 12 movies taking in $102.8 million, up 28 percent from the same weekend in 2003, when "Something's Gotta Give" opened as the No. 1 movie with $16.1 million.

"Ocean's Twelve" reunites director Steven Soderbergh with a dream cast led by George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Julia Roberts and Andy Garcia. Joining them this time was Catherine Zeta-Jones, adding to the sequel's star power.

"Moviegoers like their movie stars all in one place," said Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Exhibitor Relations. "It's like one-stop shopping for all the top stars in Hollywood."

Even better

The follow-up sends the gang to Europe, where they must pull off a virtually impossible heist to win a bet with a rival and pay off the Vegas casino owner they robbed in "Ocean's Eleven."

Given the movie's marquee-name roster and the success of the first movie, which grossed $183.4 million domestically, some industry analysts thought "Ocean's Twelve" might do even better than it did.

Still, its debut came in higher than the $38.1 million opening weekend of "Ocean's Eleven" in December 2001. Factoring in today's higher admission prices, "Ocean's Twelve" sold slightly fewer tickets than the original.

Distributor Warner Bros. and producer Jerry Weintraub already are mulling a second "Ocean's" sequel, said Dan Fellman, the studio's head of distribution.

"Blade: Trinity" features Snipes returning as the half-human, half-vampire action hero, this time battling the lord of the bloodsuckers, Dracula.

Distributor New Line hopes "Blade: Trinity" will hold up well during an onslaught of comedies, dramas and family flicks through year's end.

"Everybody always wants their numbers to be better," said David Tuckerman, head of distribution for New Line. "Still, we're basically the only movie like it. There's nothing else like it in the marketplace, a sci-fi, horror type of movie."

STAR POWER. "Ocean's Twelve" reunites director Steven Soderbergh with George Clooney, Brad Pitt, Matt Damon, Julia Roberts and Andy Garcia, this time joined by Catherine Zeta-Jones

THE ONLY ONE. Wesley Snipe in sci-fi, horror "Blade: Trinity"

Top 10

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at North American theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations Co. Inc. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. "Ocean's Twelve," $40.9 million.
2. "Blade: Trinity," $16.1 million.
3. "National Treasure," $10 million.
4. "The Polar Express," $9.8 million.
5. "Christmas With the Kranks," $7.6 million.
6. "The Incredibles," $5.05 million.
7. "The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie," $4.4 milion.
8. "Closer," $3.75 million.
9. "Finding Neverland," $1.7 million.
10. "Alexander," $1.4 million. *AP*

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New mom Julia home with twins

LOS ANGELES—Hollywood's top female star, Julia Roberts, has returned home from hospital with her twins following a health scare involving one of the premature tots, a report said Thursday.

The "Pretty Woman" star, named Hollywood's top-earning actress by the Hollywood Reporter because of her $20-million-a-picture asking price, went home on Saturday, People magazine said.

SHOW STOPPER

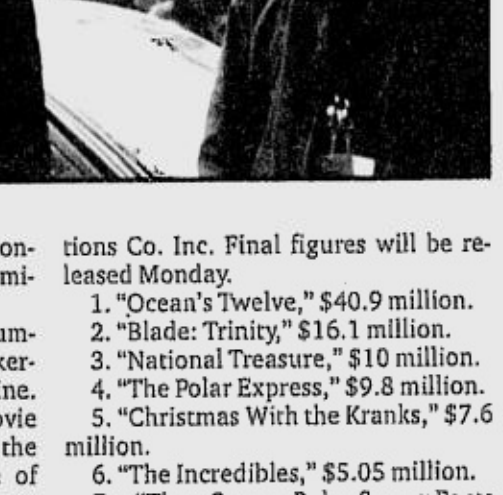
The 37-year-old Oscar-winner and her twins, a boy called Phinaeus Walter Moder and a girl named Hazel Patricia Moder, were born more than one month early on Nov. 28.

The magazine said that Hazel, who weighed slightly less than her brother, was initially kept in an incubator following her birth. But "she's doing just fine" now, People quoted a family friend as saying.

The pair, Roberts first children with her husband cameraman Danny Moder, was closely monitored by doctors after coming in with a birth weight of just 2.2 kg (five pounds).

Roberts was taken to hospital on Oct. 23 and placed on a fetal monitor after she began having early contractions more than two months before her January due date.

NEW MOM/ A3-2



HARD STOCK. Julia Roberts says sshe never got sick during her pregnancy

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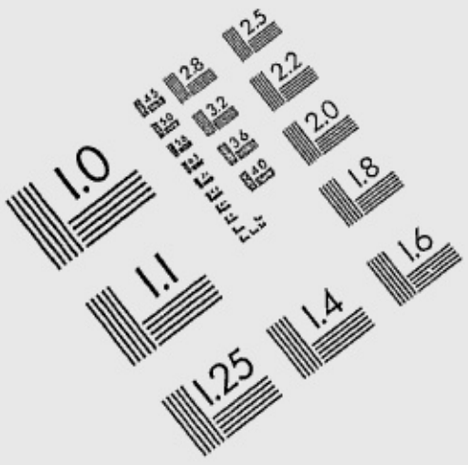

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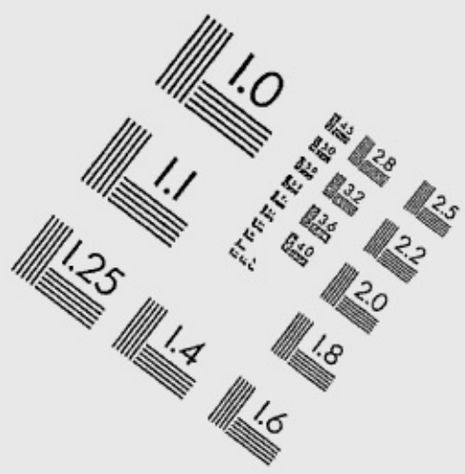

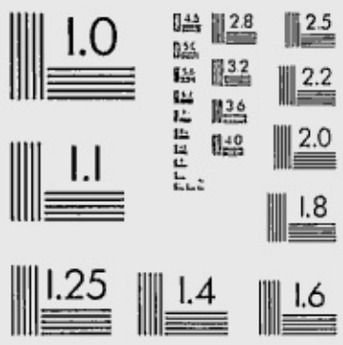

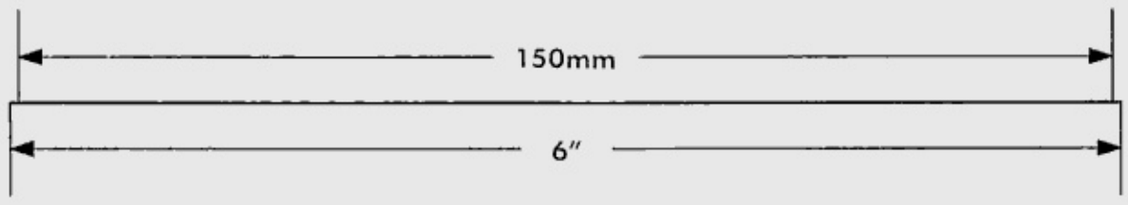

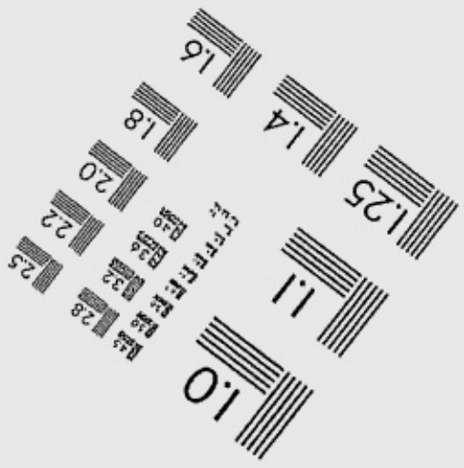

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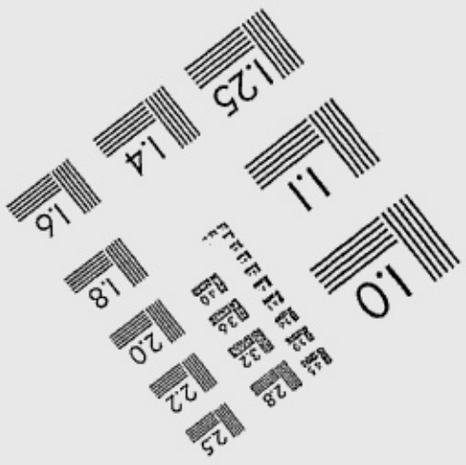

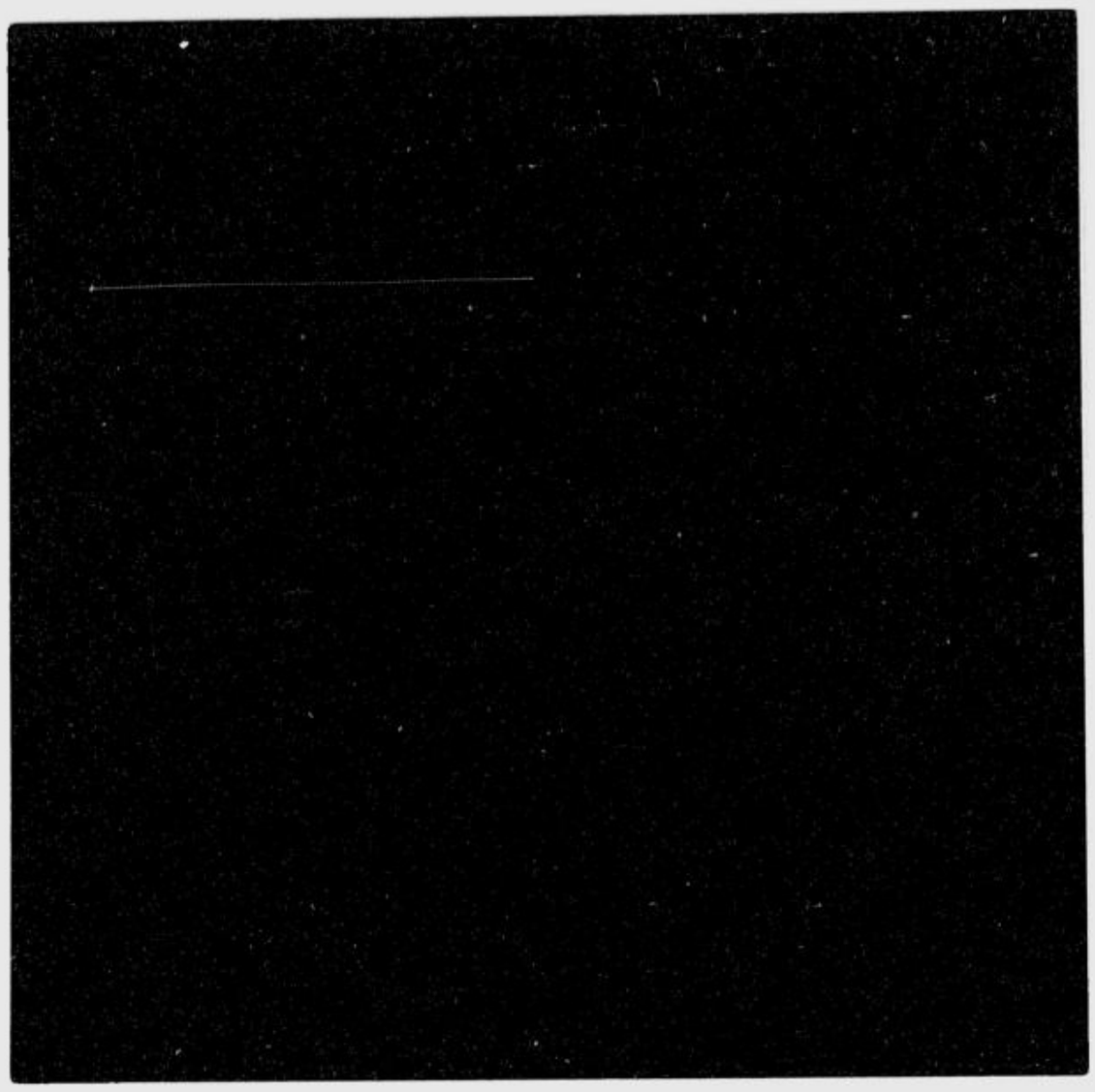

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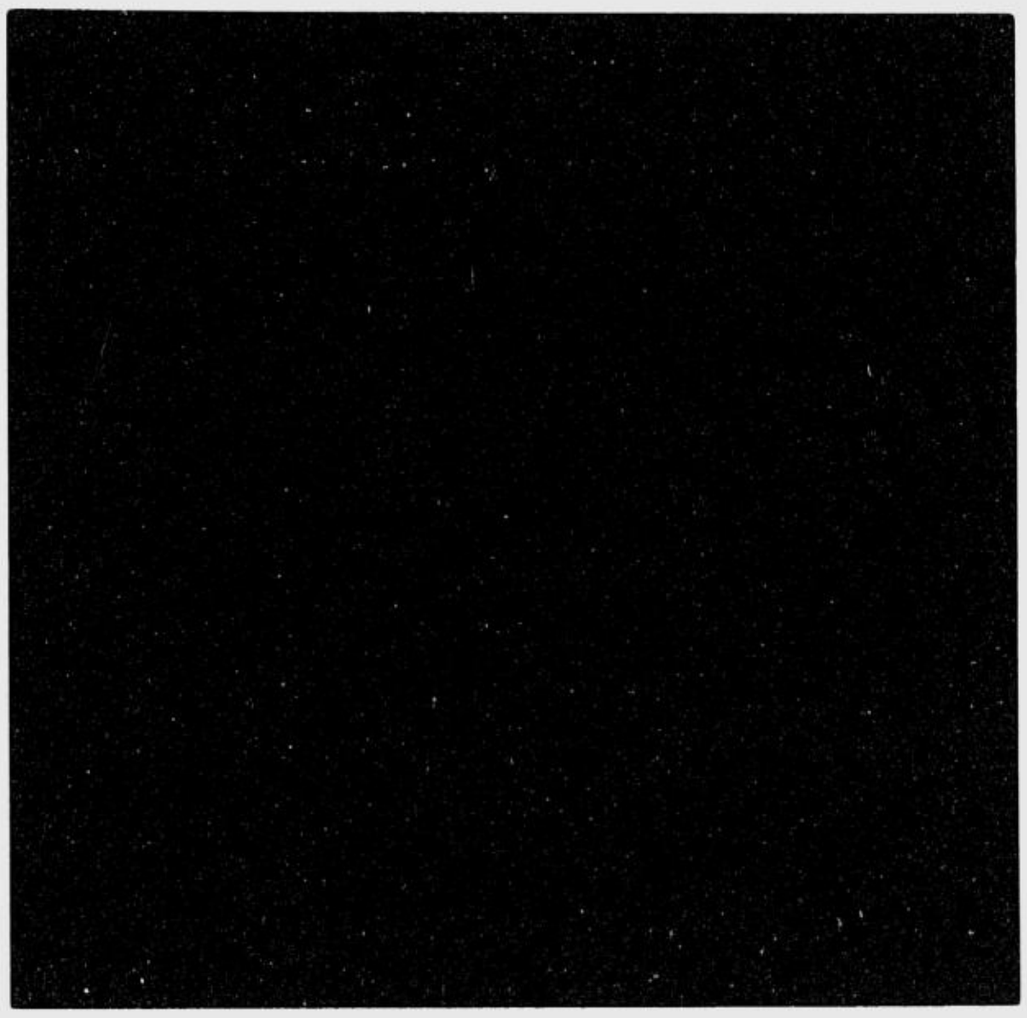

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■ Sports / A23
Buhain: From Philippine Sports Commission to Games and Amusement Board

■ News / A3
HK graft-buster talks on how to counter graft

■ Byline Inquirer
Pamaskong handog: Mga anghel sa lupa
Ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa ABC

Filipinos have forgotten what 'simbang gabi' is for

By Lito B. Zulueta

FILIPINOS started early this morning the extended trek to Christmas with the traditional *simbang gabi* that has so become their habit that they have forgotten the ritual's origins and significance.

The simbang gabi is really for farmers and

FILIPINOS/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
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No holiday Palace parties but GMA will play Santa

By Christian V. Esguerra

THERE will be no parties at the Palace this Christmas season, but Malacañang will be bringing cheers to tens of thousands

NO HOLIDAY/ A8

Rabid fans mob FPJ wake

Congress approves 'sin tax' measure

By Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

THE BICAMERAL conference committee approved last night higher excise taxes on tobacco and alcohol, which are expected to generate P17.5 billion in revenues every year.

The "sin tax" bill is the centerpiece of eight tax measures sought by President Macapagal-Arroyo to enable the government to avoid a debt default in three years.

Ms Arroyo estimates that the government will need about P80 billion in additional revenues every year to avoid a debt default.

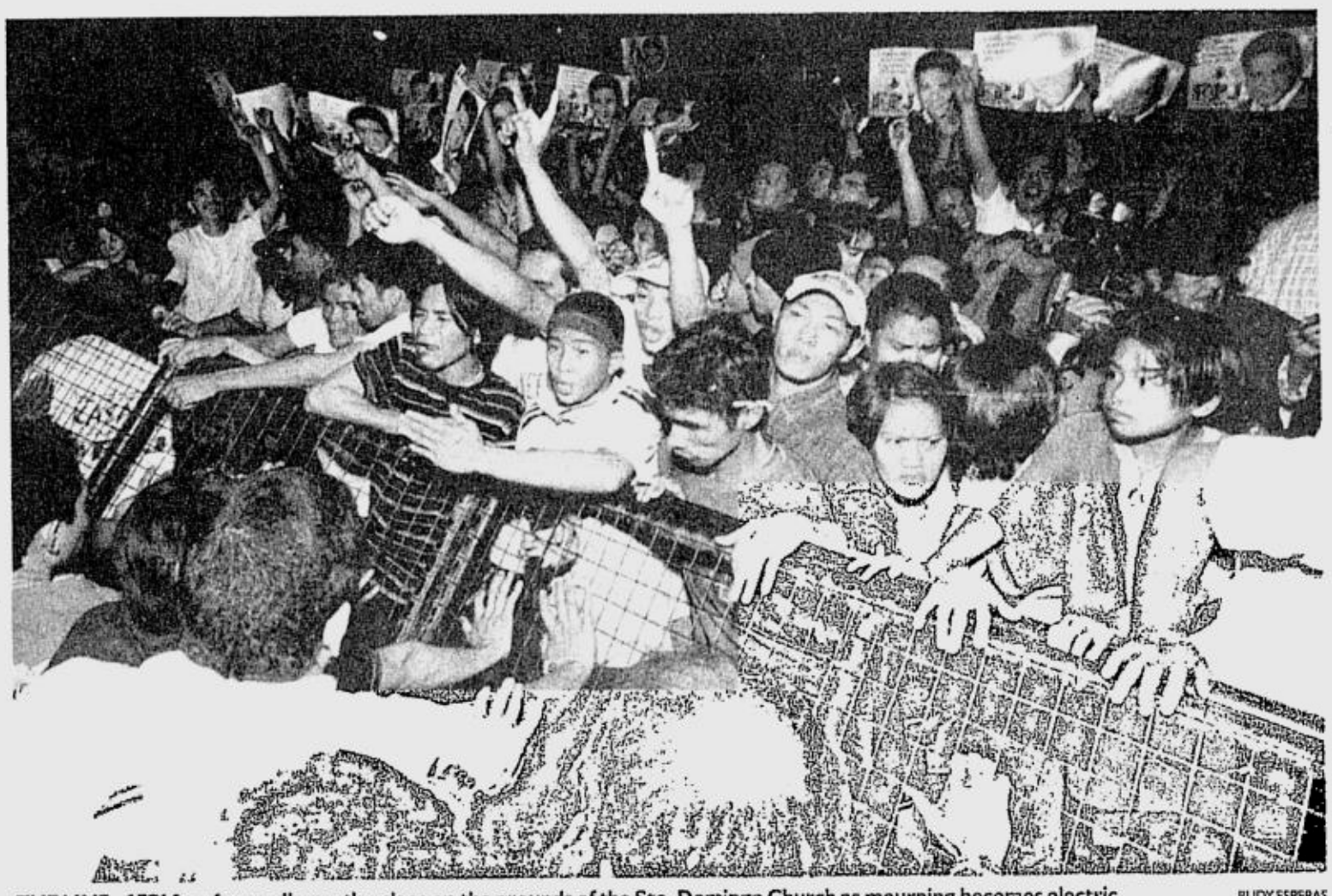
Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, a member of the bicameral committee, said that low-end cigarettes would be slapped a tax of P2 per pack; medium-end, P6.35 per pack; high-end, P10.35 per pack; and premium, P25 per pack.

Enrile said the rate would be adjusted every two years until 2011. The adjustment has been set at 3.6 percent of the existing rate plus 16 centavos.

He said the bicameral committee adopted the proposal of the Senate on distilled spirits, wines and other tobacco products. Excise taxes on alcohol-fermented liquor, distilled spirits and wines range from 30 percent to 50 percent, depending on product classification.

The committee met for more than six hours at the Westin Philippine Plaza in Pasay City to

CONGRESS/ A8



THE LINE of FPJ fans forms all over the place on the grounds of the Sto. Domingo Church as mourning becomes electric. RUDY ESPERAS

'Grief comes from voters who feel cheated'

By Fe Zamora, Volt Contreras and Luige A. del Puerto

A KILOMETER long of mourning fans of Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday endured hours of waiting just to get a glimpse of their idol's body lying at the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City.

As of 10 last night, the queue had stretched from the St. Martin Chapel in the church to Biak Na Bato and Sto. Domingo streets which are both flanking the church and also spanned from the corner of Quezon Avenue to Angelicum College, which is located at the back of the Sto. Domingo Church.

Unlike the first night, the crowd that gathered at the Sto. Domingo Church yesterday was behaved and organized.

They came practically from all walks of life—diehard supporters of "FPJ" from the May presidential election, factory or office workers, elderly folk, young students, women bearing flowers, and a man hoisting a placard with his photo and the words "Farewell, My King."

The eruptions of hysteria that marked the hour of Poe's death at 65 on Tuesday have apparently died down. The crowd has become patient, although occasional altercations flared with "FPJ volunteer marshals" controlling the gates.

Earlier, at the close of office hours at 5 p.m. yesterday, the stream of mourners and admirers had formed a line stretching for about 300 meters along Sto. Domingo Street, outside the church compound.

"This is the outpouring of grief of the voters who were cheated last May. This is phenomenal," Ronald Lumbao, a leader of the People's Movement Against Poverty, told the Inquirer.

Lumbao said pro-FPJ voters "whose votes were cheated last May" will also hold similar "outpourings of grief" in key cities outside Manila such as Cebu and Bacolod.

In the churchyard, the line made several, maze-like turns before snaking into the building's

RABID/ A12

Palace offers to make FPJ National Artist

THE WREATH from President Arroyo already in tatters is set on fire by angry FPJ mourners. RAFFY LERMA

By Juliet Labog-Javellana Cynthia D. Balana and Carlito Pablo

MALACAÑANG has offered to make Fernando Poe Jr. a national artist and broached the idea of burying him at the Libingan ng mga Bayani.

The Palace offer is wildly perceived to be attempts at appeasing the angry supporters of the king of Philippine movies.

Supporters of Poe, who accuse President Macapagal-Arroyo of stealing the presidential election from their silver screen idol, tore to pieces and burned a wreath that she had sent to a funeral parlor in Pasig City on Tuesday night.

Not a few have bewailed that Poe, who died last Tuesday, had been heartbroken by his loss by about a million votes to Ms Arroyo.

Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos yesterday disclosed that Malacañang was considering to declare Poe a National Artist in recognition of the actor's exemplary contributions to Philippine movies.

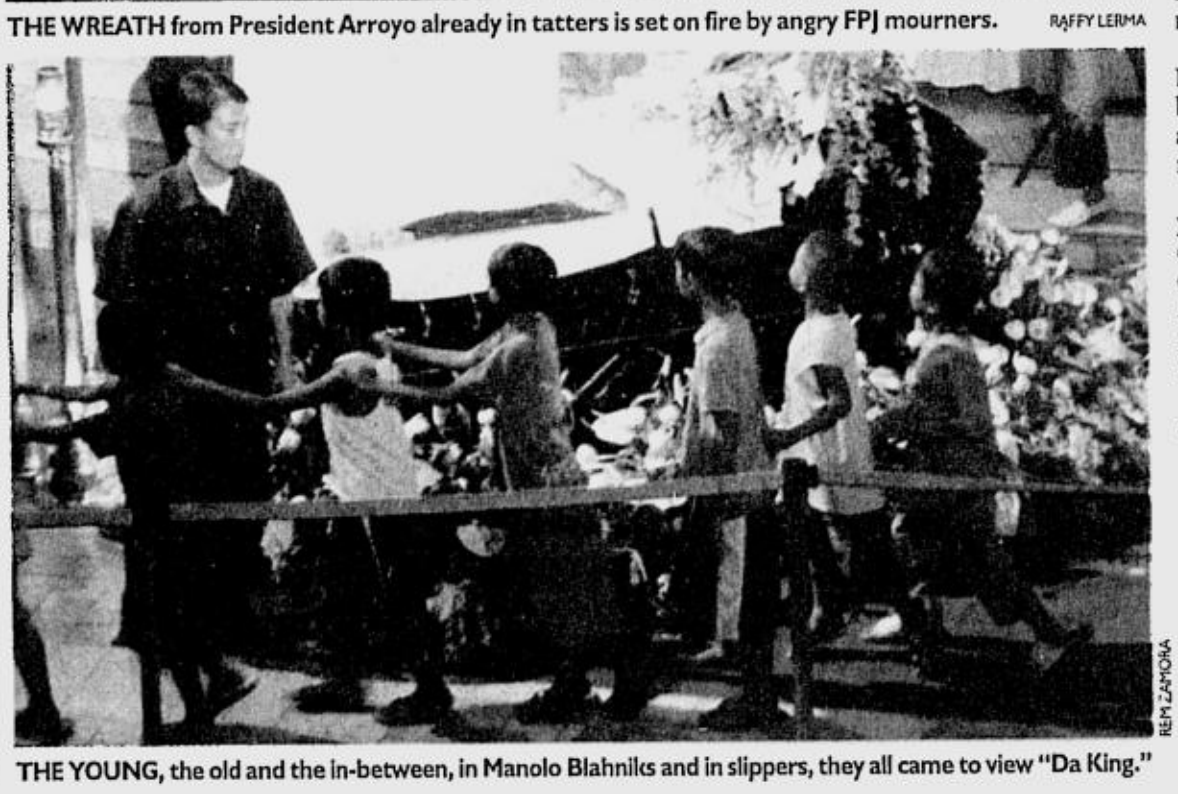
Marcos said the matter was raised by Press Secretary Igna-

PALACE/ A12

Jobless rate falls to 10.9%

THE COUNTRY's jobless rate eased to 10.9 percent at the end of October from 11.7 percent in July, the National Statistics Office reported yesterday. The unemployment level has gradually fallen from a two-year high of 13.7 percent in April. The rate was at 10.2 percent in October 2003.

The NSO said the total labor force rose 1.4 percent in the year through October to 35.6 million. During the same period, the number of people employed was up 0.6 percent to 31.7 million. An estimated 3.88 million were unemployed as of end-October. *Reuters*



REM ZAMORA

THE YOUNG, the old and the in-between, in Manolo Blahniks and in slippers, they all came to view "Da King."

Poe's last three weeks, last 24 happy hours

By Cathy S. Babao-Guballa
Contributor

IT WAS as if he knew that time was running out on him.

Fernando Poe Jr. had focused his energies on two projects in the last three weeks before his death.

FPJ was busy overseeing the packing of relief goods for typhoon victims and at the same time putting together a music video of all of his films showing the scenes where he serenaded his leading ladies. It was a retrospective of sorts and those close to him had even asked why he was doing it.

A few days prior to his attack on Saturday night someone had even jested, "*Bakit Ron, mamamatay ka na ba* (Why Ron, are you going to die)?"

To this FPJ replied, "*Hindi naman. Matagal ko na talagang plano gawin iyan, nawalan lang ng time dahil sa kampanya* (No. I've planned this for a long time but couldn't attend to it due to the [presidential] campaign)."

The Inquirer interviewed two of the closest aides of Poe, Beng Manio, his makeup artist for the last eight years and Zernan Manahan, a former child actor and manager of FPJ's stables and with whom he shared a close 36-year-old friendship.

The two recalled that in the

POE'S LAST/ A12

TYPHOON RELIEF

Hunger hones victims' survival skills

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

GENERAL NAKAR, Quezon—Waiting for relief goods and scrambling for a share when the supplies are low is a survival skill that residents of this typhoon-ravaged town are stretching to the limit.

The skill has been honed by hunger—another face of the lingering, if not recurring, disaster. "People are really hungry. They're in a difficult situation," said Franciscan nun Alma Demate.

Seen yesterday from a Super Stallion cargo helicopter, the forested slopes of the Sierra Madre had numerous patches of landslides that appeared like large, deep brown crevices.

Below, thousands of residents stood tense but alert in the unfinished municipal hall in Barangay Anoling, where government agencies and private donor groups had set up camp.

And even as Philippine and US military helicopters prepared to descend, other residents rushed to the improvised landing pad, straining to see if there were enough supplies to go around.

Having one's name in the list of beneficiaries is the all-important thing.

Beside the 15-foot statue of World War II hero Gen. Guillermo

HUNGER/ A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2004

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The eastern sections of Luzon and Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/12/16/04

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

Oil firms told: Cut prices now

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE COUNTRY'S top two refiners, Petron and Shell, should slash their gasoline and diesel prices by roughly one peso per liter this week to reflect the steep fall in world crude oil prices in the past six weeks, according to business leader Raul T. Concepcion.

Concepcion, who chairs the Consumer and Oil Price Watch, said that based on his computations, Petron and Shell should cut gasoline prices by 98 centavos for gasoline and 92 centavos for diesel this week.

In a Dec. 13 letter to Sen. Manuel A. Roxas, chair of the Senate committee investigating fuel pricing, Concepcion said this was based on the declining trend in Dubai crude oil prices.

He said crude oil prices have fallen 7.1 percent in four weeks ($34.87 per barrel) from end-October ($37.54 per barrel), and 10.6 percent in six weeks as of Dec. 12 ($33.55 per barrel).

Concepcion said oil prices have continued to weaken despite moves by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to reduce production on expectations that fuel prices would go down because of the "mild winter months" from December to March when demand for fuel for heating is at its peak.

Concepcion said his computations "confirmed" the findings of Energy Secretary Vincent Perez who made an appeal to the oil companies to roll back their prices "without indicating the amount as it is against the deregulation law for the Department of Energy to state the amount."

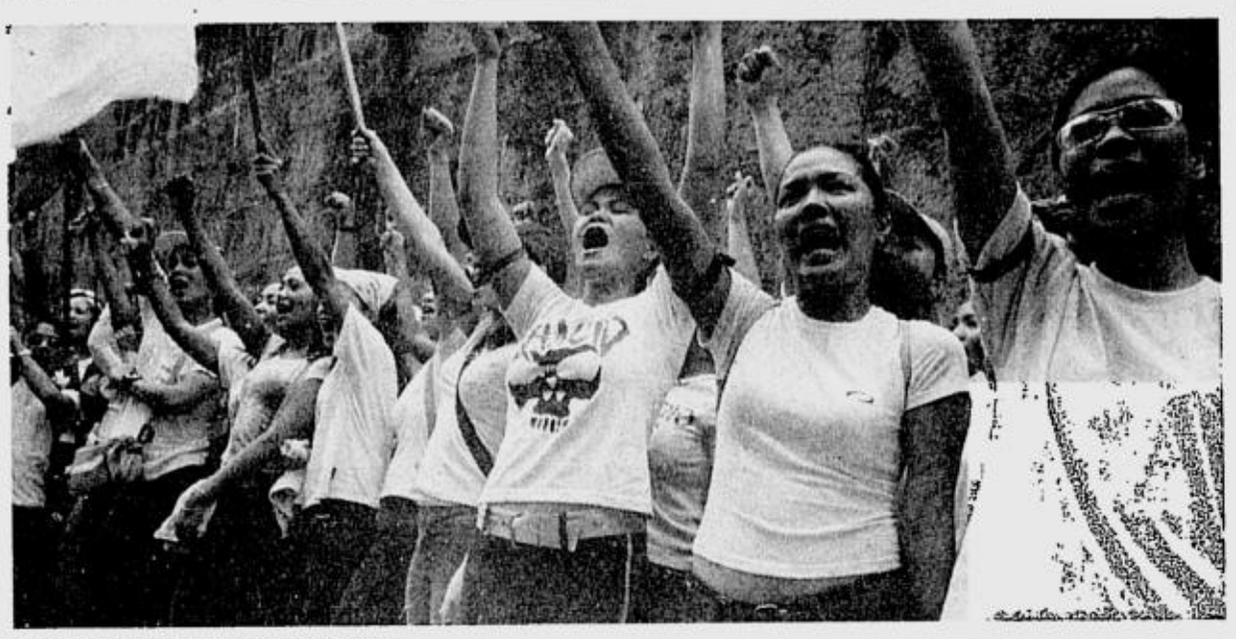
But when he confronted Petron and Shell with his detailed monthly computation of oil price changes from January to November, Concepcion said the two oil companies refused to comment.

"I told them this this will reinforce the impression of the public that when prices are going up, they are quick to announce price increases and when prices have been dramatically going down over the last six weeks, they are silent," he said.

Concepcion said officials of Petron and Shell maintained that they were in a deregulated industry, that free market competition was the sole determinant of prices, and petroleum products were traded on a daily basis by brokers in a commodity stock exchange.

Aside from a rollback, Concepcion said he has pushed for a shift in the computation of fuel prices from a monthly to a weekly comparison of prices averages "to be more reflective of the movement of oil prices in the world market.'

"Weekly price changes will correct the situation where oil companies are quick to raise prices but slow to bring them down," Concepcion said.



ENTERTAINERS' PROTEST
Filipino entertainers hold a rally in front of the Department of Labor in Intramuros to protest Japan's plan to restrict the entry of foreign entertainers to Japan. They are asking the government's help to persuade Japan to scrap the restrictions.
ERIK ARAZAS

Reyes back as antismuggling czar

INTERIOR Secretary Angelo Reyes is back as antismuggling czar.

President Macapagal-Arroyo reactivated a Presidential Task Force Against Smuggling headed by Reyes after initially giving complete powers to Customs Commissioner Jorge Jereos to run after smugglers.

But the new presidential task force is taking it easy on big-time smugglers, whom the President ordered identified and paraded before the public like kidnappers and bank robbers.

In a brief conference in Malacañang, Reyes said he was not bent on coming up with his own Order of Battle of big-time smugglers.

"You know it's difficult to come up with the list and publish it, unless you have evidence that will stand in court," Reyes said.

He said it was easy to plaster the names and pictures of kidnappers because they have warrants of arrest.

"If we do not have the warrant of arrest of people, it would mean libelous to label them as criminals," Reyes said.

When Jereos was appointed antismuggling czar months ago, the President ordered him to come up with the Order of Battle and produce results within two months.

Garcia's Baguio house garnished

RETIRED Maj. Gen. Carlos F. Garcia's vacation house and real estate property in Baguio are effectively in government hands.

Yesterday, sheriffs from the Sandiganbayan served the garnishment order on two real estate properties of Garcia , who is accused of amassing P143 million in ill-gotten wealth, five days after seizing his plantation resort in Iloilo, along with a caregiver school and an SUV.

Sandiganbayan sheriffs seized the properties after securing a certification from Baguio City assessor Estrella Tano that the 1,000 sq m lot in a proposed subdivision on Demonstration Road, Loakan, and another lot on Cliff Drive, also in Loakan, were owned by Garcia. *Armand N. Nocum*

No objection to Erap bid to attend FPJ funeral

GOVERNMENT prosecutors are not opposed to ousted President Joseph Estrada's request to attend the wake and funeral of his buddy Fernando Poe Jr., so long as the police can provide adequate protection to Estrada as well as stop any possible trouble resulting from his presence among his and Poe's rabid followers.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said they also would not oppose Estrada's plan to visit his mother at her San Juan residence but drew the line as far as his going to Hong Kong to undergo knee-replacement operation is concerned.

"We remain opposed to his trip to Hong Kong because there are competent doctors and state-of-the-art hospitals here that can successfully handle operations such as that to be performed on the former President," Villa-Ignacio said in telephone interview.

As to Estrada's request to attend Poe's wake at the Sto. Domingo Church and his Dec. 22 burial, Villa-Ignacio said the only condition is that police provide enough security to keep the Estrada and Poe loyalists in check. *Armand N. Nocum*

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GMA urged to create 'action group' vs illegal logging

By Carlito Pablo

THE CO-CHAIR of the powerful Commission on Appointments has recommended to President Macapagal-Arroyo the creation of an "action group" to come up with a unified plan to fight illegal logging.

Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) wrote Ms Arroyo about the need to convene such a group to "address the extremely urgent need to find immediate and long term solutions to the problems of the forest areas of the country."

Pichay stopped short of saying that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was incapable of addressing illegal logging.

"While the DENR is the executive department principally responsible in this area of concern, it would be better to make it a member of the action group in order that the necessary correction in regulation and personnel can be implemented instantaneously," Pichay said in his letter.

Pichay suggested that the action group be composed of the respective chairpersons of the Senate and House committees on environment and natural resources, DENR, Department of Interior and Local Government, law enforcement agencies, and representatives from the wood industry and the academe.

Aside from stopping illegal logging, the action group, according to Pichay, can include in its plan the implementation of a viable tree plantation and reforestation program, alternative to temper the effects of a total halt in illegal logging on people dependent on wood for livelihood, and prevention of the occurrence of disasters and prevention of loss of lives in forest areas.

Pichay said the action group should be able to formulate without delay a working plan within a period of 30 days or 60 days at the most since appropriate forest laws and regulations were already in place.

"The doable immediate step is to force compliance through a system that will be checked by the same legislative committees responsible for writing the laws and which exercise oversight powers," Pichay said.

Political will wins half the battle vs corruption, says HK graft buster

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

HALF the battle against corruption will be won if government exercises political will in cleaning up the system, according to the man credited with turning around Hong Kong's image from the most corrupt to a graft-free economy.

"We need tough political will in order to battle corruption," said Tony Man-wal Kwok, former deputy commissioner and head of operations of Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption, who opened a three-day workshop yesterday on the theme "Countering corruption through integrity development: A key to economic competitiveness."

President Macapagal-Arroyo invited Kwok to share Hong Kong's experience in fighting corruption with Cabinet and sub-Cabinet officials.

The President said she wanted to adopt Hong Kong's model, particularly Kwok's work at the ICAC, as the template for her anti-corruption campaign.

Kwok, who served for 35 years in customs control, drug enforcement, finance investigation, intelligence and prosecution, joined ICAC as an investigator when it was established in 1975. He rose to the post of deputy commissioner and head of operations in 1996 and led the agency through Hong Kong's reunification with China in 1997.

Among his achievements was the investigation of the collapse of Hong Kong's third largest bank which involved a loss of $385 million. His operation led to five convictions.

Kwok received a Governor's Commendation and the ICAC Distinguished Service Medal in 1998.

In a brief talk, Kwok assured the country's top officials that corruption, no matter how pervasive its reach in government and the political system, can be eradicated.

He said half the battle would be won if the top government leadership wields the political will to combat corruption.

Kwok said corruption prevention was a management solution that needs the cooperation of all sectors.

"We cannot rely on a single agency, everybody needs to respond in fighting corruption," he said, adding that a comprehensive solution is in order to root out corruption.

Another international anti-corruption expert, Fredrik Galtung, said the Philippines has had a "catalytic role" in the international campaign against corruption because of the Edsa people power revolution that overthrew a dictator and restored democracy.

Because of Edsa, the Philippine story has been an "incredibly inspirational" model for the world, said Galtung, the executive director of TIRI (governance access learning network of Norway) whose expertise has been tapped by the United Nations, the World Bank, presidents and organizations in different countries.

But Galtung, a founding member and research head of Transparency International, said the Philippines now faces "enormous challenges" in implementing its anti-corruption campaign.

Galtung said the Global Corruption Barometer, which he devised, found a "global consensus" that political parties are the most corrupt institutions.

"It is the tragedy of democracy," he said.

The police ranks second to politicians in terms of corruption, said Galtung.

Ms Arroyo, who sat through the workshop, talked about her anti-corruption campaign in a separate event, the 2004 presidential awards for Filipino individuals and organizations overseas of the Commission on Overseas Filipinos.

In her speech at the COF event, the President said 2004 was a "banner year for our campaign against corruption."

"Lifestyle checks have resulted in actual convictions and an increase in the number of cases filed against corrupt officials," Ms Arroyo said.

"A two-star general is now facing court-martial for graft. Others will follow suit as my administration seeks to carve out the cancer of corruption from the bureaucracy, and our society as a whole," she said.

She urged the overseas Filipinos to "act as our very best marketing agents abroad."

"Tell your friends and associates ab about our reform agenda to clean up government, cut red tape, reduce crime and promote a friendly and predictable business climate," Ms Arroyo said.

She expressed confidence that with Dante Ang as new chair of the COF, the commission would devise programs to promote the Philippines as an investment haven and encourage Filipinos abroad to play an active role in the country's economic and political development.

US asked to clarify visa restrictions for RP nurses

By TJ Burgonio

THE PHILIPPINES would seek a clarification on the status of the visa applications of the thousands of United States-bound Filipino nurses now pending with the US government, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo said yesterday.

The US State Department issued a bulletin last week, saying that only those who applied for employment-based immigration visa, or E3 visa, on or before Jan. 1, 2002, would be able to obtain visas starting next year.

Apart from nurses, teachers, some accountants and IT workers, among others, can apply for E3 visas, according to the US Embassy.

Romulo said he would ask Ambassador to Washington Albert del Rosario to clarify the State Department's announcement, which was seen to extend the processing of US work permits from the normal 60 days to three years or more.

"[We'll ask him to discuss] the situation of the nurses," he told reporters. "We keep pushing the envelope. That's our job. And besides, this is especially true with Japan and Europe. Filipinos have proven themselves."

"We'll make representations with the US government," another official added, even as he voiced confidence that the US government would eventually relax its new regulation to accommodate the applications of "skilled Filipino nurses."

The US Embassy in Manila explained that Washington's decision to retrograde the processing of applications for E3 visas was based on its "calculation of worldwide demand" in that visa category.

"Because the demand for E3 visas could not be satisfied within the legal limits, the foreign states where demand was oversubscribed, such as China, India and the Philippines, needed to be retrogressed," it said in a statement.

Retrogression happens when a visa category becomes oversubscribed, or when the number of qualified applicants exceeds the number of visas available. As a result, visa numbers were issued according to the date the petitions were filed, the embassy said.

According to the embassy, the US Immigration and Nationality Act sets the annual worldwide minimum for employment-based preference immigrants of 140,000.

"The embassy will continue to process E3 applications for Philippine applicants who are eligible for a visa number. Even as the retrogression takes effect in January, a number of Philippines' E3 applicants will be scheduled for visa interviews and will be issued E3 visas if found qualified," the embassy said.

Apart from the Philippines, India and China, countries with huge demand for such type of visas are also affected by the retrogression policy, the embassy said.

"Contrary to some media reports, this measure does not apply solely to the Philippines. This is a worldwide change and affects countries with high demand for employment-based immigration visas such as China and India," it said in a statement.

The E3 visa is one of five employment-based immigrant visas. Its category includes aliens with minimum two-year experience as skilled workers, professionals with a baccalaureate degree, and other workers with less than two years' experience.

Only 5 Cabinet members pass CA; Reyes bypassed

By Christine O. Avendaño

ONLY five members of President Macapagal-Arroyo's Cabinet received the nod of the Commission on Appointments (CA), which held its last session for the year yesterday.

All other Cabinet members and members of constitutional bodies like the Commission on Elections are considered bypassed, according to Senate President Franklin Drilon, who chairs the CA.

REYES

The latest to be confirmed by the CA were Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, whose nominations were approved by the commission yesterday.

The CA had earlier confirmed the appointments of Education Secretary Florencio Abad, Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano and Agrarian Reform Secretary Rene Villa.

In a news conference, Drilon said the Cabinet members deemed bypassed need to be reappointed by Ms Arroyo. "Otherwise, they cannot function any longer as members of the Cabinet," he said.

Among those deemed bypassed was Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, who was the only Cabinet member heard by the CA this year that did not make it.

Reyes faced a CA subcommittee late last month but the hearing was suspended as more senators wanted to question him. Senators were particularly interested in the frequent travels abroad of Reyes' wife.

Drilon also disclosed that Ms Arroyo did not submit to the commission the appointments of Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit and Public Works and Highways Secretary Florante Soriquez.

"We do not know the intention of the President but we hope that (she) can decide quickly on these two Cabinet members because they cannot forever be in an acting capacity," he told reporters.

Drilon warned anew Cabinet members to complete the documentary requirements, saying that "there is a danger that the CA may simply decide to reject their appointments if they continue to refuse to submit their documentation."

Publisher, DepEd execs behind erroneous book may face charges

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

THE DEPARTMENT of Education said it might bring to court a major publishing firm and at least three senior education officials responsible for the highly erroneous history textbook used by high school students for the last 13 years.

Secretary Florencio Abad announced that the DepEd is studying possible "civil and administrative" charges against SD Publications and three senior DepEd officials (one is retired) who were behind "Asya: Noon, Ngayon at sa Hinaharap."

The same charges will also likely be filed against the other DepEd officials who evaluated and approved "Asya" for use in public schools in 1997, 1999 and 2001.

On Tuesday, Abad said he had ordered the unprecedented recall of all the 1.14 million copies of "Asya" from public schools.

"Asya" would be replaced by a new "handbook" titled "Pag-aaral ng Mga Bansang Asyano" written by 19 noted history and social sciences professors from the University of the Philippines led by Prof. Grace Estela Mateo.

"The next step that we'll do after we complete (replacing "Asya") is that we'll have Undersecretary (for legal affairs Jose Luis) Gascon and a pool of lawyers look at possible civil and administrative accountability. We're studying the matter," Abad said.

It was so far Abad's most categorical response on the issue of accountability since Marian School supervisor Antonio Go exposed the book's gross errors in an ad in the INQUIRER last Sept. 20.

The DepEd eventually admitted that Go was right after UP history professors confirmed that the 316-page "Asya" was riddled with numerous factual, conceptual and grammatical errors.

SD Publications was told to shoulder the cost of printing and delivering the replacement textbooks to 5,700 public high schools throughout in the country.

Its parent company, Vibal Publishing House, is among the biggest publishing firms in the country. As such, it is DepEd's biggest supplier of textbooks.

Three authors are senior DepEd officials. Evelina Villoria is an assistant superintendent while Ruth Fuentes is a supervisor at the DepEd-National Capital Region office. Lead author Teofista Vivar is a retired superintendent.

The fourth author, Remedios Quiray, has passed away.

Abad said he saw no conflict of interest in the fact that Vivar, Villoria and Fuentes authored a textbook which the DepEd eventually approved for use in public schools.

"It fact, we encourage our teachers to write books. But they are prohibited from being publishers," Abad said.

"Asya" passed the evaluation of the Instructional Materials Council Secretariat, the DepEd bureau in charge of approving textbook content, three times in 1997, 1999 and 2001.

The textbook, however, has been used by private schools since 1991.

One of the three evaluators who originally approved the highly erroneous "Asya" for use by public schools is still working with the DepEd. Officials did not identify the evaluators.

In 1999 and 2001, SD Publications won the contract to supply all history textbooks for public high schools. "Asya" is used by second-year high school students.

Go said he found similar gross errors in "Kasaysayan ng Daigdig," the history textbook used by fourth-year students.

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Guards of Japanese film crew bag 2 Abus

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Soldiers guarding a Japanese film crew in Tawi-Tawi captured two members of the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf Muslim kidnapping group, military officials said yesterday.

The Marine unit—guarding a group of Japanese shooting a documentary on ethnic Muslims on the island of Sitangkai—noticed a boat with the suspects aboard sailing close to the film crew last weekend, said Marine spokesperson Capt. Rommel Abrau.

"The Marine soldiers intercepted the Abu Sayyaf boat and arrested the two and confiscated two automatic rifles," he said. *AFP*

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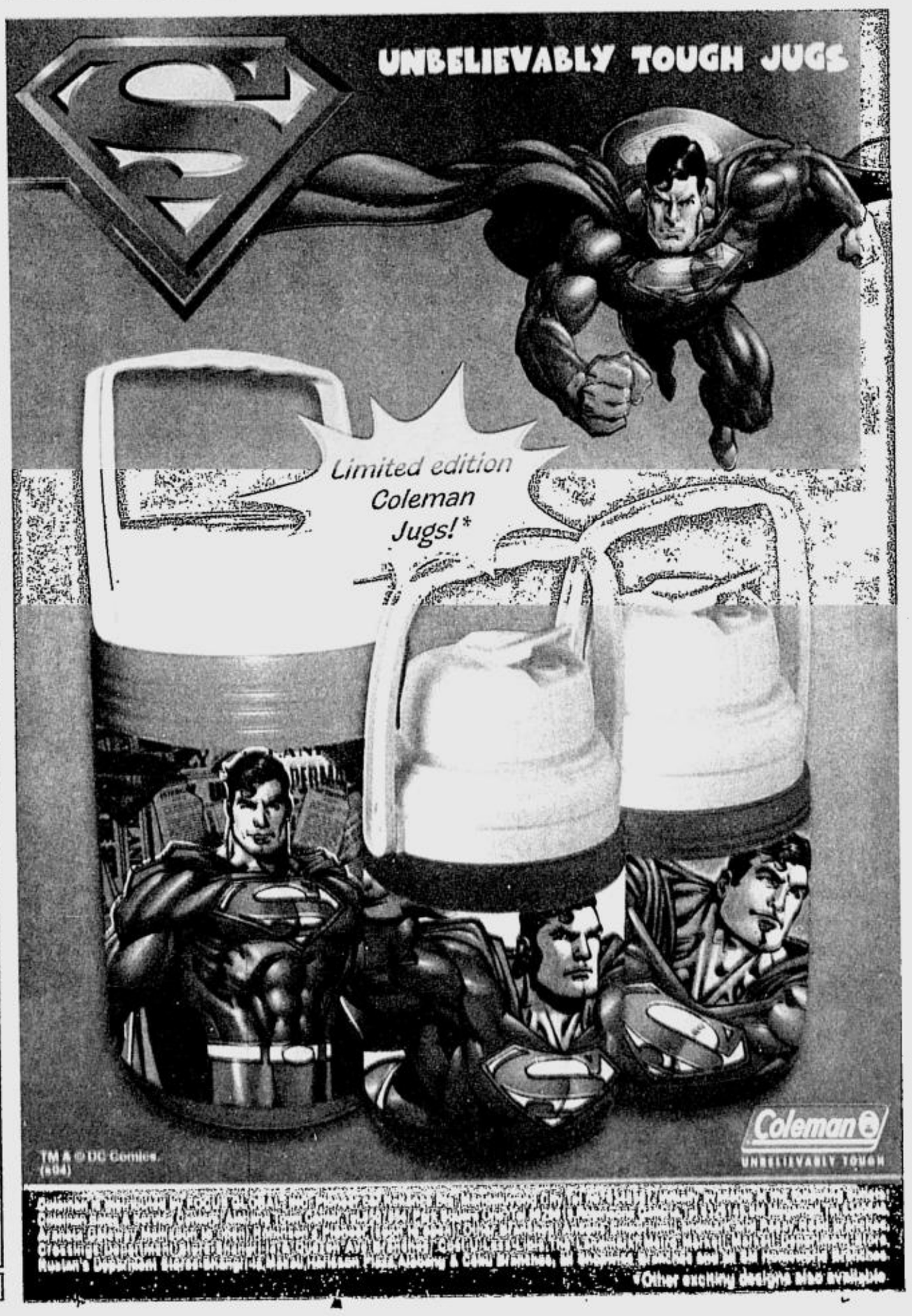

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" That in all things God may be glorified."

FORMERLY conjoined twins Clarence (left) and Carl Aguirre are inseparable during playtime at the New York hospital where surgeons separated their skulls and manipulated their brains apart four months ago. AP

Separated twins now ready for skull repair surgery

DESPITE some minor problems, formerly conjoined twins Carl and Clarence Aguirre are doing well enough to return to the operating room for the beginning of the reconstruction of their skulls, doctors said Tuesday.

On Wednesday morning, the 2 1/2-year-old twins from the Philippines will separately undergo procedures to patch bald spots on their heads, the most obvious reminder of the four operations they underwent at Montefiore Medical Center leading to their Aug. 4 separation.

Dr. David Staffenberg, their plastic surgeon, plans to shave a thin layer of skin from high on their legs and graft it to the bald spots. Carl has two small bald spots near the top of his head; Clarence needs work on about a third of his scalp, Staffenberg said.

The boys' scalps have to be restored and healed before skull reconstruction can begin because blood flow to the scalp helps heal restored skull bone.

While the boys are anesthetized, doctors with scopes will use the opportunity to examine them to study two nagging problems: acid reflux and sleep apnea, said their pediatrician, Dr. Robert Marion.

He said a muscle between the esophagus and stomach is weak in both boys and apparently is not closing properly, sending food back into the esophagus and causing spitups and possibly some burning. The weakness, which could be repaired surgically, is compounding the feeding problems that stem from the boys' position when they were connected, when they had to be fed lying down.

The sleeping problem will be investigated by an ear-nose-and-throat specialist. Marion said the boys are "night people," staying up late and sleeping until late morning, and both have a snoring problem. The doctors will look for physical causes and Marion suggested that removing the tonsils or adenoids might solve the problem. *AP*

2 coal miners found dead; 4 still missing

RESCUERS recovered two bodies from a collapsed mine shaft in Zamboanga Sibugay and searched yesterday for four missing miners after hearing muffled voices coming from the mine, police and the mining company said.

The government-run Philippine National Oil Company Exploration Corp. said six miners were trapped Tuesday when the roof of the 56-meter-deep shaft collapsed in Diplahan town.

Company spokesman Rudolph Dimen said two dead miners were found about 47 meters down the shaft, while the others were believed trapped at a depth of about 56 meters.

"We have proof of life," he told The Associated Press. "Our rescue teams can hear muffled voices."

An air hose leading down the shaft where the four miners are believed located was tugged "probably to show that they are still there," he said.

Regional police chief Vidal Querol told dzMM radio it was initially suspected a heavy downpour caused water seepage that led to the collapse.

The shaft has been operated jointly with Taiwan Overseas Mining Co. since 1999. *AP*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, December 16, 2004
3rd Week of Advent

1st Reading: Is 54:1-10
Gospel: Lk 7:24-30

When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began speaking to the people about John. And he said, "What did you want to see when you went to the desert? A tall reed blowing in the wind? What was there to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? But people who wear fine clothes and enjoy delicate food are found in palaces. What did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For John is the one foretold in Scripture in these words: I am sending my messenger ahead of you to prepare your ways. No one may be found greater than John among those born of women but, I tell you, the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

All the people listening to him, even the tax collectors, had acknowledged the will of God in receiving the baptism of John, whereas the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law, in not letting themselves be baptized by him, ignored the will of God.

Commentary

Johann Tauler (1300-1361) wrote, "St. John wrote of [John the Baptist] that he was a witness to the light... What higher praise could we give to this Saint than to call him "a witness to the light?" This light sheds its rays into the innermost and furthest depths of our souls, teaching us stability and strength. When we have received this witness we become immovable, like a mountain of iron, instead of being swayed to and fro like a reed...

Our Lord also said, 'He is more than a prophet,' that is, there are depths in us which reason cannot touch, where in the light we see light-that is, in an inward light, the light of grace... This comes to us first in a hidden manner, for our faculties cannot come within a thousand miles of these depths of our soul. The knowledge which instructs us in these depths has neither image nor form nor manner; it has no parts which can be separately recognized; it is an unfathomable abyss, not to be limited, not to be plumbed, ebbing and flowing like the sea. As we sink into it, it may seem empty and dry; yet in a moment it may well up and overflow as if it would engulf all things. We sink into this abyss, and in it is God's true dwelling place, more than in heaven or in all His creatures. Those who could find their way here would truly find God here, and would find themselves at one with God, for God never leaves this abyss. God would be present to them, and here they would apprehend and delight in eternity, for here there is neither past nor future. There is no created light which can reach these depths or illumine them; for this is nothing else than God's dwelling, God's own place."

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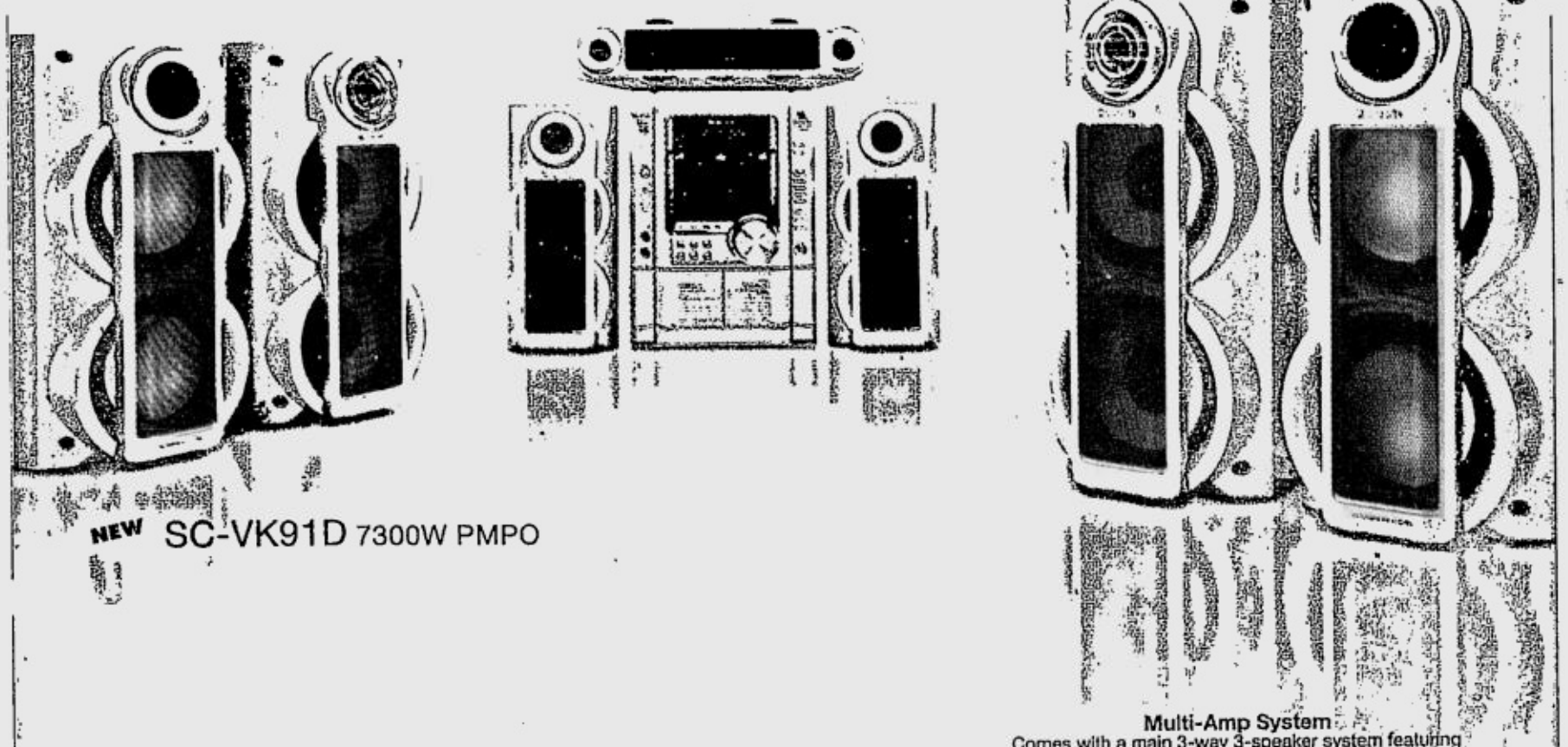

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Congress approves 'sin tax' measure

From page A1

reconcile Senate Bill No. 1815 and House Bill No. 3174.

Senators Ralph Recto, Joker Arroyo, Manuel Villar, Ramon Revilla Jr. and Lito Lapid represented the majority bloc in the bicameral conference, while Senators Enrile, Edgardo Angara and Jinggoy Estrada represented the minority.

On Tuesday night, the Senate approved its own version that sought to generate P18 billion in revenues or more than double the amount targeted by the bill that the House of Representatives earlier approved.

GMA relieved

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the revenue target of the Senate-approved bill was double the P9 billion in projected revenue on sin taxes "as found in the medium-term development plan of the executive department."

President Arroyo sounded more relieved than elated after getting word that the Senate had finally approved its version of the sin tax bill more than a month after the House passed its version.

"I thank the Senate in behalf of our people for passing the tax on cigarette and alcohol. This is a great breakthrough in our political unity and solidarity behind fiscal reform," said President Arroyo in a speech at the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission workshop in Malacañang yesterday.

Analysts said investors at the stock market mildly cheered the Senate's move to pass a version of the sin tax bill, saying this is a step to get Congress moving toward passing a revenue measure before Christmas.

"I hope that the bicameral talks will seal it. We are confident statesmanship will rule at the highest level of debates," said Ms Arroyo, who was well aware that the passage of the first of her eight tax measures before her self-imposed deadline of the end of this year was not yet in the bag.

Four revenues

She had boasted last month that her allies who dominate Congress have pledged to approve up to four revenue measures from her tax agenda before the end of this year.

But less than a week before Congress breaks up for its holiday recess, the President's allies have so far come short of their promise. The President did not say if she still expected the sin tax bill approved before the end of this year.

"We do not expect that there will be difficulties (during the bicameral conference committee meeting) and we are confident that we will have the sin taxes signed," Drilon said.

High rates for low-end cigs

Two senators decried the passage of the sin tax bill, which sought higher rates for low-priced brands of cigarettes.

They noted that although the total tax take of the sin taxes for next year alone could reach P18 billion as projected by Sen. Ralph Recto, chair of the Senate ways and means committee, the burden would fall on the low-tier brands usually consumed by poor smokers.

The Senate version, which seeks higher tax revenues, imposed a heavy burden on tobacco products.

The senators, who asked not to be named, told the INQUIRER that they were taken for a ride by fellow members of the upper chamber who approved the sin taxes Tuesday night without taking into account the welfare of those consuming locally manufactured cigarettes.

"We were made to believe that we would be given ample time to interpellate the sponsor of the measure even during the period of individual amendments," said one senator.

"That's why we had agreed early on to dispense with interpellations to speed up the floor debates," he said, adding that "but, of course, without sacrificing the quality of legislation."

Done deal

The second senator then said that the moral of the story was: "Don't rush tax measures."

Both senators admitted that they felt cheated by more senior senators after learning that even before the chamber could finish floor deliberations on the sin taxes, the final form of the bill was already a done deal.

The Senate version more than doubled the excise tax on low-tier brands of cigarettes such as Fortune and Champion (manufactured by Fortune Tobacco), but it imposed moderate increases on the other four tiers: native, medium, high and premium.

Appeasing Philip Morris

The two senators admitted that the Senate compromised version would appease Philip Morris, which controls 36 percent of the market (P18 billion in gross sales).

Fortune Tobacco, owned by business taipan Lucio Tan, controls 54 percent of the market (P27 billion in gross sales) while La Suerte retains 6 percent (P3 billion in gross sales). *With reports from Gil Cabacunagn Jr. and Elizabeth Sanchez*

Filipinos have forgotten what 'simbang gabi' is for—for farmers

From page A1

the agricultural sector, a recognition of the agrarian moorings of much of the Philippines. But Filipino Catholics seem to have forgotten.

Their short memory is apparent in the decision of several parishes in Metro Manila, for instance, to reschedule the traditional Christmas Masses from its original dawn setting to late evening, since it is quite difficult for city denizens to wake up early in the morning to fulfill the novenary.

Debasement?

Some have lamented the new practice as a debasement of tradition, an accommodation to the materialism of the era.

Actually, the rescheduling is merely a restoration of the old practice of holding Masses at midnight in the run-up to Christmas. That's is why in Europe, where the practice originated, the Mass is known as "midnight Mass."

The revisionism really started with the Spanish friars whose work of evangelization in the islands was so surefooted and creative, they made the Philippines the only Christian nation in Asia, at least until East Timor, which was also successfully Christianized by their Latin brothers, the Portuguese, became an independent nation-state.

Noting the Filipinos' love of the liturgy and extended rituals like novenas, the Spanish friars promoted the Christmas Masses. But they introduced an innovation: They held the Mass at dawn in order to fit it into the agricultural rhythm of the farmers, who usually woke up early to work the fields and retired early to prepare for work the next day. That's why the Mass became known as *Misa de Gallo*, Mass of the Rooster.

Ordinary folk lifestyle

The innovation shows why the Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans and Recollects were such effective evangelizers: They did not impose the Gospel, they applied and crafted it to suit the lifestyle of the ordinary folk. They were doing contextual theology even before 20th century theologians thought of coming up with the modern concept.

So before the farmers went to work and tilled the fields, they went to dawn Masses to pray for the birth of Christ and, by extension, for a generous yield. Thus the birth of Christ and the bounty of the land complemented one another. The Christian message found fruition in the farmer's labors and struggles.

Culinary treats

The agrarian basis of the simbang gabi is obvious in the culinary treats that have become part and parcel of the ritual: the *bibingka* (pancake made from finely grounded sticky rice garnished with carabao milk cheese and grated coconut fillings), the *puto-bungbong* (sticky rice cake steamed in bamboo shoots), and *salabat* (strong ginger tea).

There's nothing essentially wrong with rescheduling the dawn Masses to midnight to suit the working routine and biological clock of urban people. After all, the Mass is for the people, not the people for the Mass.

But urban Filipinos, many of whom are refugees themselves from rural poverty, tend to forget the struggles and pains of the agricultural sector.

Indeed, economists and experts say that agriculture is severely penalized in the Philippines in the rush to industrialization, as shown by the untrammeled commercial logging in eastern Luzon that caused the disastrous flooding and landslides last Nov. 29 and the days following.

Treated poorly

Despite the agricultural makeup of the Philippines, agriculture is poorly treated in public policy and program. Commercial banks hardly provide agricultural credit, leaving farmers to the tender mercies of usurers and loan sharks. Seed and fertilizer prices are high because of monopolies.

Because of the lack of farm-to-market roads, farmers are compelled to rely on middlemen who pay them depressed prices and sell the goods at handsome prices. If there are roads for the transport of goods, the farmer has to pay "toll fees" at police and military checkpoints.

The neglect of farmers explains the lingering feudal question in the Philippines that has fueled the battle over land reform, the Hacienda Luisita labor dispute and rural underdevelopment.

In more ways than one, the Misa de Gallo prefigures the agrarian crisis that continues to rage in the country.

Forgotten, too

The Christ of Christmas seems to have been forgotten, too.

One Christmas symbol that is universally accepted and dearly loved is the crèche, called the "belen" or the Nativity scene in the Philippines.

"Unfortunately, this symbol which was started by St. Francis of Assisi, is the target of a lot of anti-Christian sentiments in the West," Fr. Nicanor Lalog of the Diocese of Malolos told his congregation this morning during the first dawn Mass of 2004.

"Last week, there were calls in its land of origin, Italy, that the crèche should not be displayed in public places. I have seen such similar protests on US primetime news last year during my vacation there," Lalog said.

He said that in one television survey, American kids, when asked whose birthday was being celebrated on Christmas, answered, "Santa Claus." The priest said the survey confirmed the extreme commercialization of Christmas.

But adults are to blame, Lalog said. He said the materialistic attitude of adults is adumbrated in the Gospel reading today in which Jesus gently chided the crowds for looking at John the Baptist as a miracle worker.

Personal ends

Lalog said Christians may be using Christmas for their own personal ends: "In the same manner, maybe the Lord is asking us tonight: What did you go out for this simbang gabi? For a job? For healing? For a girlfriend or boyfriend? Why are we so fond of completing the nine-night novena for Christmas? Is it because we want something or because we want Jesus?"

No holiday Palace parties but GMA will play Santa

From page A1

of families in five typhoon-hit towns in northern and eastern Luzon. There will also be milk, clothes, candies and toys for children.

Social Welfare Secretary Corazon Soliman yesterday said the government would distribute about P120 million worth of relief goods before Christmas Day.

"There is still Christmas," Soliman told reporters at Camp Aguinaldo. "Our message to all victims, especially to the children, is that there are many caring countrymen that will make them feel the true spirit of Christmas."

Singing soldiers will join artists, mostly from the Cultural Center of the Philippines, in performing "therapeutic art" during a series of variety shows set in Quezon, Nueva Ecija and Aurora that bore the brunt of the landslides and floods that left more than 1,800 people dead or missing in late November and early December.

Soliman said organizers were still deciding whether to put up individual shows in each barangay or just come up with one big Christmas caravan that would go around the typhoon-ravaged area.

Noche buena packs

The parties will provide a colorful occasion for the distribution of "*noche buena*" packs to each of the 32,000 families from the towns of Infanta, Real and General Nakar in Quezon. There will be around 30,000 beneficiaries in Dingalan, Aurora and Cabaldon, Nueva Ecija.

Each pack will contain ingredients for a modest Christmas Eve meal—spaghetti and ready-to-cook sauce, rice, canned goods, noodles, sugar and salt.

There will also be milk, candies and toys for children, and clothes coming from the P120 million worth of smuggled "*ukay-ukay*" (cheap used clothes) seized by the Bureau of Customs in Muntinlupa.

Soliman yesterday oversaw the transfer of 2,800 bales of smuggled used clothes to the military's relief center in Camp Aguinaldo.

There will be another set of "family packs" containing basic necessities, like bath and detergent soap, slippers, and used shoes, Soliman said.

Soliman said the government had already distributed some P35 million worth of goods among the typhoon victims. In two weeks, the government will start the rehabilitation of Quezon and other affected provinces. Families will each be given P50,000 to rebuild their homes.

Int'l aid agencies' appeal

As Malacañang was preparing its Christmas treat for typhoon victims, international aid agencies yesterday launched an emergency appeal for more than $8 million in additional aid to combat disease in flood-stricken areas, saying 3.6 million people were at risk.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies doubled its fund-raising goal to $3.64 million and the UN World Health Organization asked for $6.4 million in additional aid.

The Philippines has so far received a total of $14 million in emergency assistance aimed at feeding 65,000 families in temporary shelters.

Many of the 880,000 people displaced by the floods depend on aid to meet basic needs while malaria and diarrheal diseases pose a constant threat, the Geneva-based WHO said.

"The priority now, from WHO's perspective, is to safeguard the health of survivors and to rehabilitate public health services," Dr. Jean-Marc Olive, the WHO representative in the Philippines, said in a statement.

Storm survivors lack safe drinking water and sanitation facilities and the risk of a malaria outbreak is on the rise, said the WHO. The UN funds would also be used to assist agriculture and education projects.

About 600 US Marines from the southern Japanese island of Okinawa have arrived in the flood-hit areas, bringing helicopters and other equipment to speed up the delivery of relief supplies and evacuate the sick and injured.

"PANAW SA KALINAW" CONFERENCE STATEMENT
Calling for a Typhoon-Related Humanitarian Ceasefire
Between the Armed Forces of the Philippines/Philippine National Police
and the New People's Army
in Luzon until the end of the Christmas Season

We are the participants of the successful "Panaw sa Kalinaw" (Journey to Peace) Conference from 2 – 4 December 2004 in Davao City. We come from various peace zones: Sanctuaries for Peace, Spaces for Peace, and other peace-building communities, NGOs, LGU officials and peace advocates from Mindanao, Visayas and Luzon which shared, learned, and relived hopes and commitment for peace. Even as we celebrated this significant coming together of grassroots peace builders, we followed with increasing concern and then grief the cumulative ravages of the recent successive typhoons in Luzon. Indeed, some of us, participants, came from those typhoon-ravaged areas.

We are saddened by the many typhoon deaths of ordinary rural folk and particularly by the ultimately though heroic demise of our new-found peace zone advocate, Fr. Charlito Colendres, Chancellor of the Prelature of Infanta, Quezon, who hails from Midsayap, North Cotabato. Fr. Colendres helped bring about the recent declaration of Infanta as a "Zone of Peace, Freedom and Development."

We are further saddened by and condemn the most recent ambush killing of a number of soldiers assisting typhoon relief operations. This goes against all sense of humanity, decency and fair play even in war, which has its limits. This also goes against any good political sense in winning the hearts and minds of people already under siege by the forces of nature.
We, therefore, call, first of all, for a credible investigation of that typhoon ambush incidents by impartial human rights and humanitarian organizations with a view to ascertain responsibility and to look into the kind of measures that would prevent incidents of this sort. Whoever may have been responsible, and in order to prevent another similar occurrence,

WE NOW CALL FOR AN IMMEDIATE AND MUTUAL UNILATERAL CEASEFIRE FROM BOTH THE ARMED FORCES OF THE PHILIPPINES/PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE (AFP/PNP) AND THE NEW PEOPLE'S ARMY (NPA) AND OTHER REBEL GROUPS IN THE WHOLE OF LUZON, FROM NOW UNTIL THE END OF THE COMING HOLIDAY SEASON, ON SUPREME HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, IN ORDER TO ALLOW ONGOING TYPHOON RELIEF OPERATIONS, FROM WHICHEVER SIDE, ENOUGH TIME AND SECURITY.

WE ASK BOTH SIDES TO ADVANCE THEIR TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS SEASON UNILATERAL CEASEFIRES, AT LEAST FOR LUZON. This we ask in the spirit of the season, the spirit of humanity, and the spirit of peace. We hope that this gesture of goodwill between enemies and for the people will somehow help nudge the Government of the Republic of the Philippines-National Democratic Front (GRP-NDF) peace process forward, together with the advance of the Mindanao Peace Process, we envision the whole Philippines becoming a zone of peace, freedom and development someday.

Signed on this 4th Day of December 2004 in Davao City by participants and guests to the "Panaw Sa Kalinaw" Peace Conference:

(sgd.) Dr. Alex Candao, Chairman, Bangsamoro Development Agency
(sgd.) Prof. Rudy Rodil, Member, GRP-MILF Peace Negotiating Panel
(sgd.) Major Angel Beuster, 602nd Infantry Brigade, Armed Forces of the Philippines
(sgd.) Benjamin Abadiano, Executive Coordinator, Assisi Development Foundation/ Tabang Mindanao
(sgd.) Sergio Villena, Philippines-Canada Development Fund
(sgd.) Karen Tañada & Atty. Sol Santos, Gaston Z. Ortigas Peace Institute
(sgd.) Mohamad Bitoucan, Sanctuaries for Peace - Carmen, North Cotabato
(sgd.) Ustadz Ebrahim Amama, Sanctuaries for Peace - Sapad, Matanog, Maguindanao
(sgd.) Salvacion Duarte, Sanctuaries for Peace - Kapayapan Lanao del Sur
(sgd.) Ramon Mosanog, Bangsamoro youth
(sgd.) Fr. Roseo P. Villanueva, Notre Dame Of Jolo College Peace Center
(sgd.) Atty. Rolando Purpa, Barrio Peace Zone
(sgd.) Violeta Baldawa, Binukgot Tribal Community
(sgd.) Fr. Benjamin Tortola, Archdiocese of Cotabato SAC
(sgd.) Ferdinand Marfil, Apostolate Vicariate of Jolo
(sgd.) Emmanuel Amancio, Catholic Relief Services
(sgd.) Lorena Randog, Community & Family Services International
(sgd.) Rosella Co, Environmental Science for Social Change
(sgd.) Engr. Nanette Diaz, Mindanao Integrated Development Program
(sgd.) Fr. Eliseo Mercado, Jr., Kilusang Mindanao para sa Kapayapaan

Aid appeal aired in Hawaii

IN HONOLULU, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz on Tuesday appealed to Filipino-Americans to donate money and goods to assist the typhoon victims.

"Your ethnic brothers need a little help," said Cruz, who also serves as the chair of National Disaster Coordinating Council.

Cruz is scheduled to meet with US military officials in Honolulu.

"We still need donations as far as cash or relief goods because it's going to be a long, drawn-out affair," he said.

The Filipino-American community in Hawaii has already coordinated an aid campaign for the Philippines. According to 2000 Census figures, Hawaii's 170,635 Filipino-Americans make up about 14 percent of the state population.

Cruz said assistance from the US military has been crucial in getting aid to remote areas that were hit the hardest and were inaccessible by land or sea. Roads were destroyed by mudslides and the waters were littered with floating logs.

The US military has pledged a dozen helicopters, hundreds of troops and two Navy ships to help with relief efforts. Adm. Thomas Fargo, commander of the US Pacific Command, said American forces had so far helped deliver more than 200,000 pounds of relief supplies. *Reuters/AP*

Hunger hones storm victims' survival skills

From page A1

Nakar, after whom this town was named, the residents milled around a village official and clamored to see the list.

A man shouted: *"Palakasan naman dito* (You list down only those people you know)!"

To be listed is the thing

"Lista is the magic word here," said Toti Cuadro. "If you're not listed, or you don't have a card, you won't receive your goods."

Cuadro's three sons had tagged along, and, like their father, waited impatiently for what would have served as the family's breakfast, lunch and dinner.

To ensure his family's share, farmer Eduardo Avila volunteers as a *"maghuhurnal* (loader)" of the relief goods.

"It's like food for work, ma'am," said Avila, a resident of the coastal village Minahan that was hit by landslides.

Jet fuel for light

Juana Cruz, 45, has mastered the sound of a Huey helicopter preparing for landing.

Holding a small empty plastic bottle, she ran toward the Vietnam War-vintage chopper and begged the pilot to give her some Jet A-1 fuel.

"For the lamp, sir," said Cruz, who had walked all the way from the distant Barangay Katalinlingan Sulok.

General Nakar's 19 villages have been without electricity for two weeks now.

Fuel from coconut oil is now also scarce because the rampaging waters from the mountains had swept away the supply, said Lourdes Pisico.

But yesterday, the family of the late Ambo Coronacion was top priority.

Coronacion, exposed to the elements since he lost his house in Minahan, died early yesterday—perhaps of pneumonia, said a relative of his who had come to fetch the fuel.

"We need some light for the wake," the man said.

'Alas puno'

Those still with the means to eke out a living try not to depend on relief goods.

Bella Astrera drives a tricycle, ferrying passengers to and from the *poblacion* (town proper) up to the breached portion of the Agos Bridge.

But lately it takes hours to fill the seats because many residents can no longer afford the fare and are setting out on foot, she said, adding in the local slang:

"Alas puno dito (The time when a tricycle leaves is when every seat is occupied)."

At the far end of the bridge linking the towns of Infanta and General Nakar, the INQUIRER found farmer Venancio Bunan sitting on a muddy pile of rocks and fallen trees.

Since last week when the landslides claimed his farm, his house and his carabao, he had turned to stevedoring to earn a living.

"It will be long before we can resume farming," Bunan said.

Dozens of men worked under the bridge built through a loan to the government by the Asian Development Bank. Their chainsaws whirred, slicing the logs that had lodged under the bridge.

When the area is cleared, the government will send a crane to begin reconstructing the bridge, the workers said.

Virtual begging

Like the other residents, members of the Negrito tribe Dumagat have no option but to make do with relief supplies.

Rosario Aligado, pregnant with her eighth child, has been walking to and from Anoling to try and get a share of the goods. But most of the time, she has been going home empty-handed.

Still, she returns to try her luck.

"Paroo't parito lagi, nagbabakasakali," said Aligado, who was with seven other women who, like herself, had been on a daily routine of virtual begging.

The cost of food items in General Nakar have risen. Yesterday, *bangus* (milkfish) was going for P100 a kilo.

Sister Demate said the rehabilitation of the farms and fishing grounds should start soon.

The Prelature of Infanta, through Bishop Rolando Tirona, has its hands full soliciting relief goods from outside Quezon.

They who lost everything

Social worker Rhodora Baja confirmed the scramble for relief goods. But this, she said, was understandable among people who had lost everything they had.

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9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Araneta Center
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Sta. Mesa
Tanay

12:00 NN to 6:00 PM
Divisoria Center

DECEMBER 30 Thursday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Concepcion-Malabon
Dart Street-Paco
EDSA-Cubao Aurora
Farmers Plaza
Folgueras
Head Office
Honorio Lopez Blvd.-Balut
Pritil-Tondo
Sta. Mesa
Sto. Cristo-CM Recto
Tutuban

10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Ortigas-Robinson's Galleria

12:00 NN to 6:00 PM
Divisoria Center

DECEMBER 31 Friday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Head Office
Quiapo
Sto. Cristo-San Nicolas

LUZON

DECEMBER 18 Saturday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Agoo
Aparri
Baguio-Bonifacio
Baguio-Magsaysay Blvd.
Baguio-Session
Bangued-Abra
Batac
Benguet-La Trinidad
Calamba Market
Candon
Daet
La Union Main
La Union-ML Quezon
Laoag-Gen. Segundo
Legaspi-Mabini
Lucena, Quezon
Naga Main
Paseo de Sta. Rosa
San Pablo Main
Santiago City Road
Santiago-Maharlika
Solano
Sorsogon
Sta. Cruz-Laguna
Sta. Rosa-Balibago
Tuguegarao-Balzain
Tuguegarao-Luna

DECEMBER 30 Thursday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Alaminos
Apalit, Pampanga
Baguio-Cariño
Baguio-Magsaysay Blvd.
Baguio-Session
Balanga, Bataan
Baliuag-JP Rizal
Baliuag-Trinidad
Cabanatuan Maharlika-North
Cabanatuan Maharlika-South
Cabanatuan Main
Cabanatuan-Paco Roman
Calamba Crossing
Calamba Real
Canlubang-Carmelray
Cauayan
Dagupan-Fernandez
Dagupan-Perez
Dinalupihan, Bataan
Gapan
Guagua
Hagonoy, Bulacan
Iba, Zambales
Ilagan
Laguna Technopark
Laoag Main
Lingayen
Lucena-Red V
Naga-Gen. Luna
Olongapo
Olongapo-Gapan Highway
San Fernando-B. Mendoza
San Fernando-Dolores
San Fernando Main
San Fernando-Sindalan
San Jose, Nueva Ecija
San Miguel, Bulacan
San Pablo-Colago
Subic-Baraca
Subic Bay
Vigan

DECEMBER 31 Friday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Dagupan Main
Iriga, Camarines Sur
San Carlos, Pangasinan
Tabaco

VISAYAS

DECEMBER 30 Thursday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Antique
Bacolod-Gonzaga
Boracay
Cebu-Opon
Cebu-Tabunok
Iloilo-Delgado
Iloilo-Iznart
Kalibo
Roxas
Roxas-Arnaldo

DECEMBER 31 Friday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Bacolod-6th Street
Bacolod-Araneta
Bacolod-Capitol
Bacolod-Gatuslao
Bacolod-Libertad
Bacolod-North Drive
Cebu-Downtown Center
Cebu-Taboan
Silay
Tacloban Main

MINDANAO

DECEMBER 31 Friday

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM
Butuan
Cagayan de Oro-Cogon
Cagayan de Oro Main
Cotabato-Makakua
Davao-Bajada
Davao Center
Davao-Rizal
Davao-Sta. Ana
Davao-Toril
Dipolog-Gen. Luna
Gen. Santos-Pioneer
Iligan-Gen. Aguinaldo
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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

PLO chief seeks end to armed uprising

RAMALLAH, West Bank—New PLO chair Mahmoud Abbas called for an end to the armed uprising, as Israeli tanks Tuesday rolled into Gaza in the aftermath of the most lethal Palestinian attack since Yasser Arafat's death.

On the day that a Palestinian policeman and Thai woman were killed in violence in the Gaza Strip, Abbas said opposition to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories should be limited to non-lethal means.

"The use of weapons is harmful and it should stop," Abbas, the overwhelming favorite in January's Palestinian presidential election, told London-based Arab newspaper Asharq Al-Awsat.

He also emphasized "the necessity of keeping the intifada clear of weapons because the intifada is the legitimate right of the people to express their rejection of the occupation by popular and social means."

Despite his opposition to the militarization of the struggle against Israeli occupation, it was his strongest criticism of the armed factions since succeeding Arafat at the helm of the PLO after the veteran leader died on Nov. 11.

His comments were published the day after Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon blasted the new-look Palestinian leadership and the security services for doing nothing to rein in armed factions.

Angered by the deaths of five Israeli soldiers on Sunday after militants blew up a tunnel near the border between Egypt and the Gaza Strip, Sharon said he saw "no change" from the Palestinian Authority.

In the largest Israeli operation in the Gaza Strip since Arafat's death, tanks and bulldozers staged an early morning incursion in Khan Yunis.

Witnesses and residents said around 15 houses had been destroyed in the southern town's refugee camp, while an army spokesman said a military unit "had destroyed houses where Palestinians were firing mortars or other arms."

According to the spokesperson, 300 mortar shells have been fired in the area since November, targeting Jewish settlements or military posts.

A Thai woman working at a nearby Jewish settlement was killed later Tuesday in a Palestinian mortar strike, Israeli medics said.

A Palestinian policeman was also killed and two of his colleagues were seriously wounded when Israeli soldiers opened fire near the disused Gaza airport, Palestinian medical sources said.

In another attack, an Israeli soldier was wounded by shrapnel from a rocket fired from Gaza by the Islamic radical group Hamas, military sources said.

Abbas has been working behind the scenes to persuade militant groups such as Hamas, responsible for the majority of anti-Israeli attacks since the September 2000 start of the Palestinian uprising, to call a halt to their campaign.

"We hope to reach positive conclusions in the next few weeks," he said.

But Hamas' overall leader Khaled Meshaal told the BBC that the organization has no plans to call a ceasefire. *AFP*

Top Saddam aides to face trial next week

BAGHDAD—Saddam Hussein's top henchmen will start going on trial for crimes against humanity next week, Prime Minister Iyad Allawi said as he warned violence would increase after Iraq's landmark elections in January.

"The trial will begin next week of the symbols of the former regime who will appear in succession to ensure that justice is done in Iraq," Allawi said Tuesday.

Saddam, seized by US forces along with 11 of his top Baathist lieutenants, is being held at Camp Cropper, a vast US base near Baghdad's international airport, Human Rights Minister Bakhtiar Amin confirmed.

All 12 appeared in court in July for the first time since their capture to hear preliminary charges leveled against them.

In Amman, Saddam's defense team immediately disputed the planned trials, which Amin said would start by end-March rather than next week.

"The interrogation (of detainees) in the absence of their lawyers is invalid and the accusations made against them are also invalid according to legal rules," said the spokesman for the Jordan-based team, Ziad Khassawhen.

Government officials had said Saddam, who could face the death penalty, would go on trial after the Jan. 30 elections, billed as the first free Iraqi vote in half a century.

His capture on Dec. 13, 2003, has done nothing to stop the deadly insurgency in which thousands of people have been killed.

As a deadly car bomb exploded Tuesday near the Green Zone in Baghdad, visiting US military chief Gen. Richard Myers insisted the elections would not be derailed by attacks, despite acknowledging a probable spike in violence.

"We said all along that violence will increase as we move towards the elections ... They (insurgents) will stop at nothing to try to keep Iraq from becoming a free country," Myers said.

Looking beyond the vote, Polish Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski said Warsaw plans to cut the size of its force in Iraq from 2,500 troops to 1,700 in mid-February.

But Allawi said unrest was only likely to increase after the polls.

"Terrorist strikes and attacks will not stop after the elections. On the contrary they will increase because this is a fight between good and evil," he told parliament.

Allawi, however, announced that the insurgency had been dealt a blow by the killing of an aide to Iraq's most wanted man, Jordanian Islamist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, blamed for a string of deadly attacks and the killing of hostages. *AFP*

Continental Airlines partly blamed for Concorde crash

PARIS—A French legal inquiry into the July 2000 Concorde crash outside Paris that killed 113 people presented its findings Tuesday that put part of the blame on Continental Airlines—exposing the US company to a criminal lawsuit and multimillion-euro compensation claims.

The report by judge Christophe Regnard concluded, after four years of questioning experts and witnesses, that the causes of the crash were two-fold: a structural fault in the Concorde's design, and a titanium metal strip left lying on the runway from a preceding Continental plane.

The metal strip played a "direct" role in the accident, which killed all 109 people on board the New York-bound Concorde and four people on the ground, the report said.

But it also said the Concorde suffered a "relative weakness" on the interior surface of its distinctive delta-shaped wings which held the fuel tanks.

When the Air France Concorde, speeding down the runway at Charles de Gaulle airport on July 25, 2000, hit the titanium strip, shredding one of its tires, chunks of rubber were sent through a wing fuel tank.

With the tank ablaze and engine power failing, the supersonic plane plummeted into a hotel near the airport in a fireball.

The spectacular disaster ultimately contributed to the aviation icon being pulled from the skies last year.

Continental Airlines categorically denied any responsibility for the crash and said it would fight any criminal charges flowing from a French probe of the accident.

"We strongly disagree that anything Continental did was the cause of the Concorde accident and we are outraged that media reports have said criminal charges may be made against our company and its employees," said Continental spokes-person Rahsaan Johnson in a statement.

"We are confident that there is no basis for a criminal action and we will defend any charges in the appropriate courts."

Regnard's report said the problem with the weakness of the Concorde's wings was discovered during its years of service but "were not sufficiently noted by relevant parties" such as its maker, Aerospatiale, and France's air safety office, the BEA. *AFP*

FATAL COLLISION
Indian Army soldiers assist in removing a body from a damaged car of a passenger train in village Khanpur, in India's northern Punjab province, about 300 km northwest of New Delhi Tuesday. An express train crashed head-on into a local train Tuesday in northern India, slamming into one another along a stretch of rural track, officials said. At least 31 people were killed. AP

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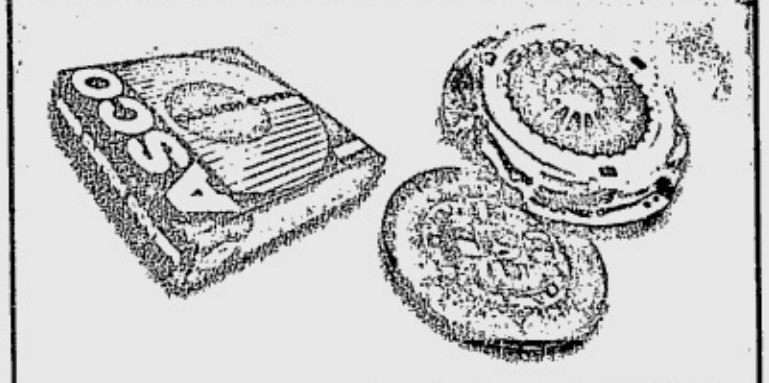

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Asian pupils dominate math, science–study

WASHINGTON — Singapore students were the top performers in both mathematics and science in a worldwide survey of more than 360,000 fourth and eighth graders, Boston College said in a report published on Tuesday.

The quadrennial Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study, or TIMSS, for 2003 also found students from South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong performed very well in math and science, repeating results found in 1995 and 1998.

In mathematics, in both the eighth and fourth grades, Singapore had a significantly higher average achievement rating than the rest of the participating countries. Asian countries or regions took six of the top 10 slots for eighth-grade math.

Singapore's eighth-grade students had an average score of 605 out of 800 points, with the international average of 46 countries at 467. In the same category, Japan's score was 570, Russia's was 508 and the United States scored 504 for 15th place, the report said. Eighth-grade students are usually about age 13.

For fourth grade, for which students of 25 countries or territories were measured, Singapore's students led the ranking with an average score of 594 against a worldwide 495, followed by Hong Kong with 575.

Japan was third with 565, Russia was ninth with 532 and the United States 12th with 518. Fourth-graders are generally about age 9.

In science, Singapore dominated both age groups, followed by Taiwan, South Korea, Japan and Hong Kong, the survey showed. *Reuters*

Google, others to put more books on the Web

WASHINGTON—Google Inc. wants to save you a trip to the library. The search engine that revolutionized how people use the Internet has teamed up with some of the world's greatest libraries to put their books in your living room.

At the same time, the nonprofit Internet Archive said libraries from five countries, including China and India, have agreed to add one million digitized books to its archive, with some 70,000 expected to be online by next April.

"There will be a reshaping of how book access is done through both the commercial and library systems," said Internet Archives founder Brewster Kahle. "Isn't it fantastic? Having this much access is just fantastic for everybody."

Google said on Monday it plans to scan millions of books from Oxford University, Harvard University, Stanford University, the University of Michigan and the New York Public Library to make them available through its search engine.

"We believe that having more information in our index leads to a better search experience, and we always want to make sure that users find the information they're looking for," said Susan Wojcicki, director of project management at Google.

Wojcicki declined to say how much the project would cost and how long it would take.

Nonprofit archiving efforts like Project Gutenberg and the Internet Archive have been placing public-domain materials online for years. Yahoo Inc., Microsoft Corp., and other commercial search engines have joined the effort. *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Ukraine's PM denies calling for force

KIEV—Ukraine's pro-Russia Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich scrambled to save his faltering reputation Tuesday by denying that he supported the use of force against pro-Western opposition demonstrators now poised to carry their leader to power. "This information is false. We were not talking about using force but only about establishing order," Yanukovich said of events that followed a contested November 21 poll that was annulled days after he was declared winner. But he also accused the colorful orange-clad demonstrators of staging an illegal coup d'etat. Britain's Financial Times quoted Ukrainian administration and other sources as saying that Yanukovich lobbied outgoing President Leonid Kuchma to send in the crack forces after demonstrators angry over widespread voting fraud blockaded his and other offices. *AFP*

Gunmen hijack Greek bus

ATHENS—Two foreign gunmen hijacked a Greek bus carrying 26 passengers on Wednesday and demanded to go to Athens airport to leave the country. The gunmen freed five hostages, two men and three women. The first hostage released, about five hours after the bus was seized, was a middle-aged man whose son said his father had heart problems. The bus was seized about 6 a.m. along a highway from the Athens suburb of Marathon, used during the Olympic race of the same name this summer, police said. Confusion surrounded the identities and aims of the gunmen carrying out the hijack, the first such incident since a spate of bus hijackings in Greece in 1999-2000. Police said shots were fired on the bus after it was seized in the middle of early morning commuter traffic. *Reuters*

Taliban security chief nabbed

KANDAHAR—Afghan security forces have captured Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar's personal security chief as he travelled in a van to the southern city of Kandahar, provincial officials told Reuters on Tuesday. The capture of Toor Mullah Naqibullah Khan, who headed Mullah Omar's household security, could help US and Afghan forces track down his boss, one of the most wanted fugitives in the US-led war on terror. "We have arrested top Taliban figures Toor Mullah Naqibullah Khan and Mullah Qayoom Angar on the way between Arghandab and Kandahar. They were carrying a satellite telephone and some important documents," said a senior Kandahar security official, who requested anonymity. *Reuters*

Cuba steps up war games

HAVANA—Cuba pressed on Tuesday with its biggest military exercises in decades, with 400,000 reservists joining regular forces and millions of civilians in wargames which the authorities say are aimed at deterring a US invasion. The second day of the "Bastion 2004" exercise went ahead as the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies said Cuba has increased defence spending for the first time in many years in "a reflection of growing tensions between Washington and Havana." Cuban regular troops are also taking part in the exercises, heavily covered by the communist nation's official media. Trucks towing armored cars and officers armed for battle were mobilized on the streets of Havana. Massive underground shelters where planes, tanks and heavy artillery are housed were opened to combat troops. *AFP*

Australia warns of attack on Hilton

SYDNEY—The Australian government warned Wednesday that it had received specific intelligence suggesting an imminent terrorist attack in Indonesia, possibly targeting a Hilton hotel. However, the Indonesian authorities played down the statement by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, insisting there was no intelligence to back up the warning. "We have received credible new information suggesting terrorists are ready to carry out an attack shortly in Indonesia, possibly targeting a Hilton hotel," the Australian statement said. The Hilton Hotel group's Indonesian hotels are Jakarta, the resort island of Bali and the eastern city of Surabaya. *AFP*

More abuses by US Marines in Iraq bared

WASHINGTON—US Marines fired a pistol in a mock execution involving four young Iraqi looters and shocked another Iraqi detainee with an electric transformer until he "danced," a document made public on Tuesday showed.

The June 16 US Navy document detailed 10 "substantiated" incidents of detainee abuse in Iraq involving 24 Marines dating back to May 2003. The Marine Corps said 13 Marines were convicted in courts-martial stemming from the incidents, getting prison sentences of up to 15 months.

The document was written seven weeks after pictures of US Army soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners at the Abu Ghraib jail became public, triggering worldwide condemnation.

It was one of numerous Navy documents released by the American Civil Liberties Union, which obtained them under the Freedom of Information Act. In a June 14 e-mail, a Navy criminal investigator wrote that his Iraq "caseload is exploding, high visibility cases are on the rise."

"The defense department has insisted from the outset that abuse, to the extent that it occurs at all, is aberrational," said Jameel Jaffer, an ACLU lawyer. "I think we now have overwhelming evidence that that's not true, but that abuse was widespread and that it was systemic in the sense that it was the result of policies adopted by the defense department."

Air Force Lt. Col. John Skinner, a Pentagon spokesperson, said, "We've never denied that misconduct sometimes occurs. But in all instances, we thoroughly investigate cases to determine the facts and hold responsible individuals accountable."

The June 16 document listed a series of previously unknown incidents of detainee abuse by Marines, as well as 10 cases that Navy investigators, who handle cases involving Marines, examined as possible abuse but deemed "unsubstantiated."

It described an April 2004 incident at Al Mahmudiya in which Marines shocked an Iraqi detainee with an electric transformer, placing live electrical wires on the detainee's shoulder, noting that "the detainee 'danced' as he was shocked.'"

The Marine Corps said four Marines were convicted of charges including assault, cruelty, maltreatment, and making a false official statement, with prison sentences ranging from 60 days to 15 months. A fifth Marine was given administrative punishment.

The document described incidents in June and July 2003 in Adiwaniyah. It stated that Marines "ordered 4 juvenile Iraqi looters to kneel beside 2 shallow fighting holes & a pistol was discharged to conduct a mock execution." It did not give the age of the Iraqis. Marines in the case also were accused of locking looters in an abandoned tank and spraying looters with a fire extinguisher.

Three Marines in the incident were convicted on charges including detainee abuse and dereliction of duty, with two being sentenced to 30 days hard labor, and the third getting 14 days of restricted movement, and all being reduced in rank.

Charges were withdrawn against a fourth Marine.

In August 2003, a detainee suffered second-degree burns on the back of his hands when a Marine guard at a base at Al Mumudiyah used a match to ignite an alcohol-based hand cleaner that had been squirted on the man's hands, the document stated. *Reuters*

Spain nabs 5 suspected militants

MADRID — Spanish police have arrested five men suspected of links to Islamic militant cells that planned to bomb the High Court and Real Madrid's Bernabeu soccer stadium, the Interior Ministry said on Tuesday.

They are the latest of more than 100 suspected Islamic militants to be arrested in Spain since the March 11 train bombings in Madrid, though many have been released for lack of evidence.

Two suspects were picked up in the Basque administrative capital of Vitoria, two in Madrid and one in the Aragon region in northeast Spain.

"These men were part of a group of people who were forming a cell of radical activists, potentially dangerous to the security of the state," Interior Minister Jose Antonio Alonso told reporters.

"One of them has links with the March 11 attacks," Alonso said, referring to the train bombs that killed 191 people and wounded 1,900.

The ministry said the men were three Algerians, a Moroccan and a Spaniard of Moroccan origin identified as 27-year-old Khalid Zeimi Pardo.

Pardo was suspected of links with Moroccan Amer Azizi, who the ministry said was wanted for his roles in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States and in the Mad-rid train bombings.

The ministry said the Algerians were connected to a Salafist cell dismantled last year in Spain, which in turn had supported a France-based cell's foiled plot to attack the Russian Embassy in Paris with a car bomb.

They were identified as Abdelkader Lebik, 31, Abdallah Ibn Moutalib Kaddouri, 30, and Brahim Amman, 38. *Reuters*

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Poe's last three weeks

From page A1

last 24 hours prior to his massive stroke, FPJ had been very happy and preoccupied with preparations for what would be his last get-together with close friends.

Manio said that on Friday night (Dec. 10) FPJ spent most of his time at his FPJ studios in San Francisco del Monte, Quezon City, overseeing the packing of relief goods.

Studio's renovations

"He was also checking on the last stages of the studio's renovation. The bathrooms were finished that day just in time for the party and he was so excited about it," Manio shared. Since November this year, the studio had been undergoing repairs. On one wall, FPJ had installed a photo montage that highlighted all the heroes he had portrayed through the years. A similar montage hangs in his Antipolo home and only recently, had decided to put an exact replica in his studio. "He was so happy when he saw the pictures hanging on the wall. He was looking at it often, and was proud of it," Manahan recalled.

Dec. 11

At 6 a.m. on Dec. 11, Manio said FPJ called her up to check on the giveaways he was planning to give to some special friends that evening during the party at the studio.

Among those invited to the dinner were a group of women graduates from Siena college, friends of his dating back to the early '70s. Manahan recalled how FPJ liked to unwind after working at the studio in a small dining place close by called "Satisfying Grace" which was owned by the Lozanos whose daughter Nanette eventually became part of FPJ's Siena gang. "He asked me if I had checked the price of the mini component system that he planned as gifts. I said that it seemed the 10 units would not be ready for the party," Manio related. They then agreed that she should just come over to FPJ's Greenhills home at 10 a.m. to finalize things.

At Poe's Greenhills home, all was quiet. FPJ's wife, Susan Roces, had left early that morning to attend to the family rest house and farm in Batangas. At 10 a.m. Manio arrived to trim FPJ's hair and groom his nails. "He was excited about the party. Instead of the component system, he ordered 10 baskets of gourmet food from Santi's. He showed them to me," Manio recounted.

Around 11 a.m. Manio said that Poe's friend, former Merdeka films producer Elmer Lim came to visit. "They talked for a while. Then he had lunch."

Lunch was served in his bedroom by his trusted aide Caloy. "Usually, he eats light. He had a small side table where he ate while watching TV," Manahan said.

Manio finished grooming Poe at around 2 p.m., and they agreed to meet in the evening for the party. FPJ spent the rest of the afternoon at home watching television and napping in between.

Light sleeper

Manahan explained that FPJ had always been a light sleeper, and that often as he watched TV, he would drift off to sleep, 30 minutes, one hour, sometimes for two hours. "It was heaven for him if he could sleep for four hours straight," Manahan said.

At around 6 p.m. Poe and his aide Caloy left for Cinema Audio studios to continue recording and editing his MTV project.

"He said he was going to approach San Miguel Corp. and Philippine Airlines for sponsorship. He told me, 'Zernan, if the sales are good, part of the proceeds, I'll donate to the Actor's Guild. That's how si Kuya Ronnie was. To the very last, he was thinking of other people," Zernan recalled.

Finishing stages

The MTV was in the finishing stages. Poe was collaborating with friends actor Jimmy Fabregas, director Augusto Buenaventura and his nephew Jeffrey Sonora on the project.

The MTV, Manahan shared, includes film clips and soundtracks of all his famous movies showing him serenading his leading ladies.

The final cut would have shown him singing, what Manahan described as one of FPJ's favorite songs, "Doon Lang" to leading lady Maricel Soriano in the film "Batang Quiapo."

'Doon Lang'

Manahan said that the lyrics of the song somehow described FPJ's life. "We had goose bumps when we remembered his wish for that song to end his MTV."

What did it mean? "Doon Lang"? When we think about it, it's like he was saying goodbye.

Early Friday evening, the mood at the FPJ studios was festive. Tables were set for 40 people though Poe only expected about 25 of his close friends to arrive. He was most excited to meet up with his Siena gang whom he had not seen in a while.

Among the dishes served that evening were *estofado*, chicken with vegetables, roasted calf, *sotanghon*, beef with brocolli, leche flan and macaroni salad.

FPJ arrived from his recording session at around 8:30 p.m. He went around, greeted his guests and sat down to dinner in a round table by the basketball court. In his table that evening were Fabregas, Salvador, Rep. Chiz Escudero, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay and old friend Jog de Castro. Dressed in a striped polo shirt over maong pants, he was in a happy mood and was trading stories and laughing with his friends.

Soft heart for waiters

At around 10 p.m. he called Manio aside and reminded her to give the waiters P500 each for their services that evening.

Waiters, according to Manahan, have always held a special place in FPJ's heart. Many, many years ago, when he was just starting out, Manahan said that FPJ was out on a date. When the bill came, he realized that he was short on cash. He sat fidgeting in the restaurant until a kind head waiter noticed his unease and asked him what the problem was. When he told him his dilemma, the waiter shelled out some of his own money and gave it to FPJ. "Since then, he never forgot the kindness shown him, and he took good care of every waiter he met," Manahan said.

Second beer

It was about 10:30 p.m., FPJ was on his second beer. He rang up boxer Manny Pacquiao to congratulate him on his latest triumph. A few minutes later a commotion in his table occurred. All of a sudden FPJ had thrown up.

"I knew instantly that something was wrong because in all the years that I had known Kuya Ronnie, that never happened," Manahan recalled.

Looked unconscious

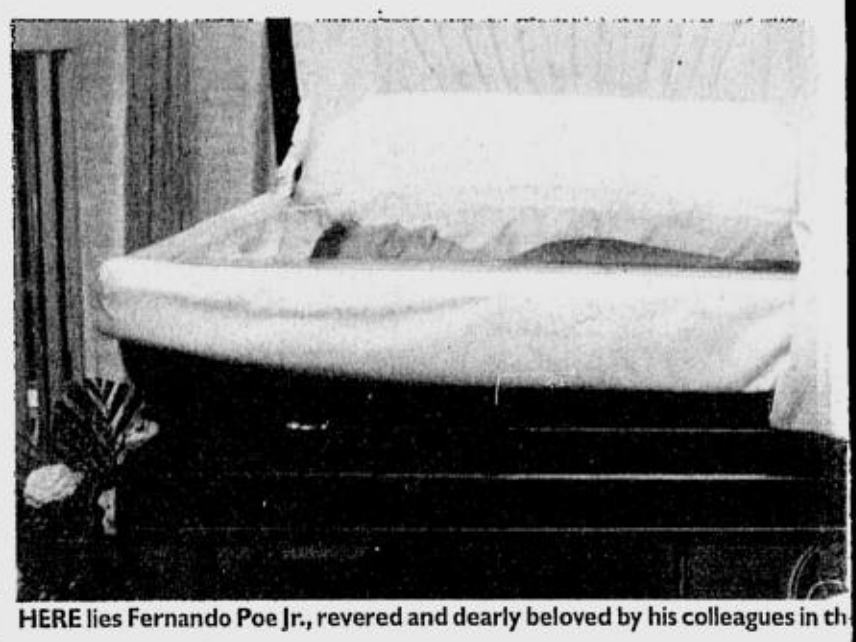
His friends became frantic as Caloy rushed over with a towel, manager Susan Tagle also ran to his side. Manio tried to revive him, wiping his brow and cheeks with a cool towel and some ice.

"He looked unconscious. Right away Mayor Binay said let's rush him to the nearest hospital," Manahan recounted.

In a flash, Mario, FPJ's driver, backed up Poe's car into the driveway and his friends gently loaded him into his white Toyota Land Cruiser. Speeding off into the night, with a security car ahead of the convoy, Poe remained quiet and still as his driver and aide drove furiously to Saint Luke's Medical Center.

Upon arrival, as he was brought down from his vehicle onto a wheelchair, Manio recalled Caloy saying that he whispered to his boss, "*Andito na po tayo sa St. Luke's* (We're here at St.Luke's)."

Manio said that Caloy told him that FPJ looked around and then gazed heavenward before he slipped into a deep, deep sleep.



HERE lies Fernando Poe Jr., revered and dearly beloved by his colleagues in th

VIPS at the Arlington East Funeral Homes in Pasig City on Tuesday included House Speaker Jose de Venecia and wife Gina. REM ZAMORA

THE KISS from Imelda Marcos (above, le and FPJ son Ronian (above, right). The go times with her husband as recalled by Su Roces (at right) brings a brief respite of delight at the memories. REM ZAMORA/JOAN

REM ZAMORA

A BLAST from the political past, Bro. Mike condoles with the widow.

PULLING at the floral offering from Presi gusto outside the Sto. Domingo Church c

Palace offers to make FPJ National Artist

From page A1

cio Bunye when he came to visit Poe's body at the Arlington Chapel the other day.

Bunye also discussed the possibility of burying Poe at the Libingan ng mga Bayani in Makati but said that Poe must be first declared a National Artist to be eligible for burial at the Libingan, according to Marcos.

Marcos said that Poe's family was not keen on burying Poe at the Libingan and would rather bury the body at the place of their choice.

She said that declaring Poe a National Artist would be more appropriate considering his achievements as an actor, writer, director and producer.

At the Commission on Appointments hearing on the confirmation of Bunye's appointment, Marcos said she asked the press secretary if the offer was true and if the declaration would indeed be made on Dec. 21, the night before Poe's burial.

Amador and Canseco too

She said that Bunye mentioned about the "sense" in Malacañang to also include Zenaida Amador and George Canseco in the declaration. Amador was one of the founders of Repertory Philippines while Canseco was a prolific songwriter.

In a statement, Bunye said it would not stand in the way of giving honors to Poe if there was a clamor from the people.

"We will go by the wishes of the people and our institutions, as well as the bereaved family, on the matter of bequeathing the proper tribute to honor Fernando Poe Jr.," Bunye said.

Though she was being spurned by Poe's supporters, Ms Arroyo was paying respects to Poe in her own quiet way.

Before delivering her speech at an awards ceremony of the Commission on Overseas Filipinos in Malacañang, Ms Arroyo asked the audience to pray for Poe.

"Let me ask everyone to bow your heads in silent prayer for the eternal rest of a beloved Filipino, the late Fernando Poe Jr.," the President said.

Calling herself a fan of the former action star, the President expressed her grief at his death and urged the country not to bring politics into the mourning period.

Destabilization moves

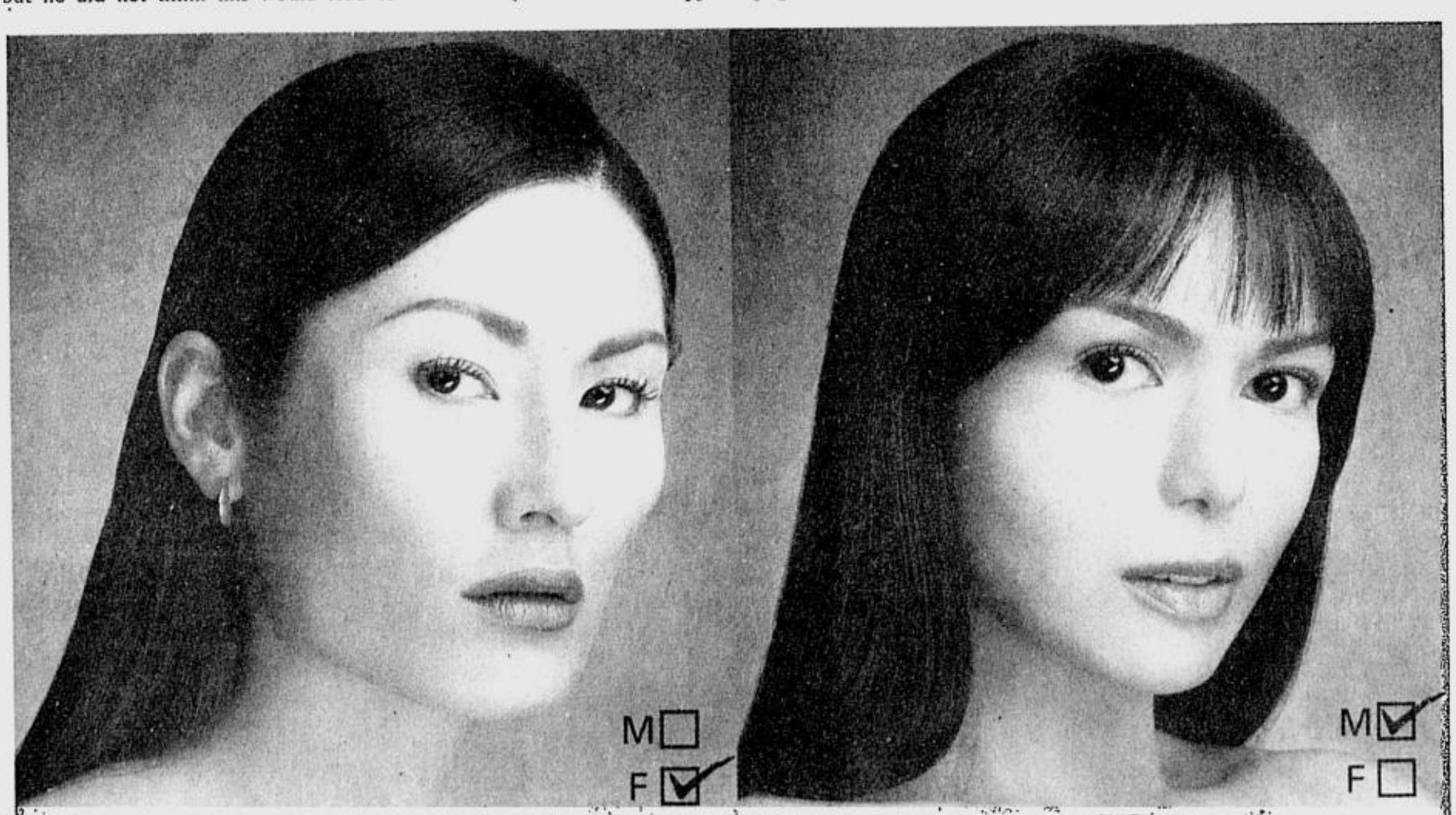
However, in a speech on Tuesday, opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel urged the President to stay away from Poe's wake to prevent violence.

The death of Poe sent political shock waves throughout the country, with some seeking to use his sudden demise as a platform to attack Ms Arroyo.

Opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson conceded that the death of Poe would elicit strong emotions from the movie star's supporters but he did not think this would lead to destabilization moves against the administration.

Lacson was reacting to Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago's warning the other day that "professional saboteurs" would manipulate and exploit the grief of Poe's supporters.

(See continuation opposite page.)



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e movie industry and by Filipinos from all walks of life. REM ZAMORA

BOSS" Danding Cojuangco, San Miguel chair, with wife Gretchen pay their last cts at the Sto. Domingo Church on Wednesday. Also in photo is Noel Trinidad. JOAN BONDOC

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dent Arroyo, FPJ fanatics do it with n Tuesday night. RAFFY LERMA

YESTERDAY'S stars Eddie Mesa, Rosemarie Gil are moved to tears. REM ZAMORA

Rabid fans mob FPJ wake

From page A1

right entrance and toward where Poe's coffin lay at the St. Martin Chapel.

A 15-meter wooden divider had been put up to separate that wing from the rest of the church's interior.

For sidewalk vendor Ursula Macawili, 52, the crowd was proving to be "bigger and more chaotic" than the one that turned up for the wake, held in the same church, for the assassinated opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr. in August 1983.

"The crowd was swelling even before [Poe's coffin] got here," said Macawili, who in 1983 was already selling newspapers and religious items at one of the church gates.

But Macawili is not exactly an objective crowd estimator.

She proclaimed herself not only a fan of FPJ but also a "witness" to his acts of generosity. For example, she said, the movie star distributed bags of groceries and P2,000 each to victims of a fire that razed her cousin's neighborhood on Luzon Avenue in Quezon City years ago.

No Ninoy

Unlike the disturbing image of the dead Ninoy Aquino with his bruised face and blood-stained clothes, the dead Poe had a smile that evoked good memories—hardly the stuff that would inspire a people's uprising.

In fact, show biz prevailed over politics on Tuesday night until the wee hours of Wednesday, the first night of the wake.

"There's deep-seated resentment, but the rage, the passion—they are not just there," entertainment writer Isah Red said after viewing the crowd at the churchyard.

Red, who was also at the Aquino wake 21 years ago, said there was no comparison between the two deaths—"unless FPJ was assassinated, [in which case] the people will have a concrete reason to blame the government for his death."

More than a million people turned out for Aquino's funeral, which also marked the start of protest actions against the dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Three years later, Marcos was ousted after a four-day "people power" revolt.

Thousands turned out on the first night of the wake for Poe at Sto. Domingo Church, but the crowd thinned out by daybreak.

Hours before midnight, furious fans tore apart a wreath sent by President Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband, and later destroyed another wreath from Speaker Jose de Venecia.

"Are they insulting us?" a man shouted.

"Now, let's wait for the wreath from [Senate President Franklin] Drilon," his companion said.

No one fainted at the sight of the dead Poe, who looked debonair in a blue suit and a blue tie with white polka dots.

And whatever anger seethed in the hearts of his fans was quickly doused by the sight of Robin Padilla, Jestoni Alarcon, or even a bleached-blonde Mystica on the arm of a young lover.

In August 1983, only a handful of movie stars showed up for Aquino, whose sister, Lupita, was herself a movie director. The rest stayed away for fear of offending Imelda Marcos, who had established herself as a patroness of the arts.

But the show biz denizens active in the anti-Marcos protest rallies, like Behn Cervantes, Mitch Valdez and Jim Paredes, among others, were noticeably absent at Poe's wake.

Those who turned out in droves were the stuntmen and their families, production coordinators and workers, bit players, and fiercely loyal fans who had known Poe and his wife, Susan Roces, for nearly five decades.

There was Paz Cantos, 65, who said she was only 15 when she became a Roces fan.

"I have been Susan's follower for 48 years, and there are many of us who have been their fans for so many years," she said.

Cantos said former fans had been employed by the Poe household, and many others were volunteering to assist in the wake.

"Dory, a former fan of Rosemarie [Sonora, Roces' sister], is now with Susan. Angge, formerly with Ronnie [Poe], then Susan, is now with Nora [Aunor]. Me, I've always been with Susan," she said proudly.

Personal encounter

At least one man, Luis Roxas, 47, had begun hawking FPJ merchandise—arm warmers (elbow protectors typically worn by basketball players) with an embossed "I Love FPJ" slogan, for P50 a pair.

Like Ursula Macawili, Roxas claimed to have had a personal encounter with Poe. He said he once worked as a "still man" employed by Regal Films in one of Poe's action movies.

But not fruit vendor Elisea Matias, 75. Nevertheless, she waited for at least eight hours to get a glimpse of him.

"I want to see him for the last time, then I can go home," she told the INQUIRER.

Matias fought back tears as she spoke of her idol and hero: "I loved all his movies, and I voted for him in May."

This fierce determination to see the fallen icon was shared by thousands of others.

The hearse bearing Poe's body arrived at the Sto. Domingo Church from the Arlington East funeral home in Pasig City a few minutes past midnight yesterday.

At 2 a.m., the gates of the St. Martin Chapel, were still shut. Bishop Teodoro Bacani was then celebrating Mass.

By that time, the crowd had numbered 5,000, according to a conservative police estimate.

As soon as news spread that the body had arrived, the crowd pushed closer to the chapel as organizers and marshals struggled to keep them at bay.

The fans invaded the tents set up for the media, and served as background for TV journalists reporting live.

Since Tuesday night

Those who had been waiting for hours were expectedly irritated.

"I've been here since 7 p.m. [Tuesday]," said slim young woman who was tugging at a sleepy child.

"I heard on TV that there would be no difficulty seeing him. Can't you ask them to let us in now?" she pleaded.

The actors coming to pay their respects kept the crowd entertained for a while.

A yell of relief filled the air when the marshals started ushering people into the chapel at a little past 2 a.m.

The mourners got a chance to view the body for only a few seconds, but it was clearly enough for his fans.

Some emerged from the chapel smiling; others looked shaken. A woman sobbed inconsolably as she was led away by her companion.

Elderly women held hands as they came out, their eyes wet with tears.

"I saw his face. He looked so calm. It's as if he's just sleeping," said Natie Henson, 60.

"I'm happy and sad. Happy because I saw him even just briefly, and sad because it's such a waste for him to have died this early. But I know that wherever he is, he's happy now," she said.

'FPJ! FPJ!'

The hearse bearing Poe's body emerged from the Arlington East gates at around 11:30 p.m. Tuesday, with the crowd chanting "FPJ! FPJ!"

A number of pick-up trucks and motorcycles followed the funeral convoy as it cruised through Tramo Street, Ortigas in San Juan and Aurora Boulevard, where people in their night clothes lined the streets, holding lighted candles.

Some of them said they had been closely monitoring events on the radio and had been waiting outside their homes as early as 10 p.m.

But Janeth Ignacio, a diehard fan of Poe's, had a bit of bad luck. He parked his Isuzu Highlander (with plate URW-782) on Mercedes Avenue corner C. Raymundo Street to go to Arlington East.

When he returned to his vehicle, he said, he found that it had been forced open and that P15,000 and his Nokia cell phone 7650 were missing. *With a report from Ruth L. Navarra*

Palace offers ...

Lacson, who ran for president early this year after failing to agree with Poe on who between them should step down and represent the opposition, said he would go to Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City where Poe's remains lie.

Half staff

At the House of Representatives and the Senate, allies of the actor are appealing for the Philippine flag to fly at half-staff in his honor.

Opposition leader Sen. Edgardo Angara said Poe deserved the honor because he was a man who stood out in his field.

Only two members of the majority bloc so far have expressed agreement to the proposal.

Administration Rep. Juan Miguel Zubiri (Lakas, Bukidnon) said a House decision to lower the flag to half-staff at the Batasan Pambansa in Quezon City "would be a gesture of magnanimity."

"It can be a step forward in the process of healing the nation's political wounds," Zubiri said in an interview. "And politics aside, FPJ has been a part of our consciousness through the movies he has made."

Rep. Crispin Beltran (party-list Anakpawis) said he found nothing wrong with the proposal, noting that the "man deserved a tribute for a lifetime of service to the Filipino people."

"FPJ touched many lives. Many Filipinos especially the poor and downtrodden who saw him as their own hero would agree and laud such a gesture," Beltran said.

Committee on rules

House Majority Leader Rep. Prospero Nograles (Lakas, Davao City) said the committee on rules, which he chairs, had asked the House legal division to issue an opinion regarding the proposal.

The proposal was referred to Nograles' committee after a heated debate on Tuesday afternoon following such a suggestion on the floor by Rep. Teofisto Guingona Jr. (LDP, Bukidnon).

Guingona said that the lowering of the flag to half-staff could be a "gesture of unity with the family in this period of mourning."

Republic Act No. 8491, or the Flag and Heraldic Code of 1998, says that the flag can be lowered to half-staff to honor the President or a former President, Vice President, Chief Justice, President of the Senate and Speaker of the House.

It also provides that the tribute can be accorded to "other persons" as may be determined by the National Historical Institute.

Sets precedent

But Rep. Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo (Kampi, Negros Occidental), a brother-in-law of the President, said it was up to Malacañang to decide on the matter.

"If we in the House allow it to happen, then all presidential candidates will have the same thing as this will set a precedent," Arroyo said. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Ruth L. Navarra*

Congratulations, Rene J. Novisteros of North Cotabato, for guessing correctly. You win an Asian Cruise for 2.

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- Michelle S. Gaudario, Makati City
- Girlie J. Flores, Makati City
- Arlene Brigoli, Las Piñas City
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OPINION

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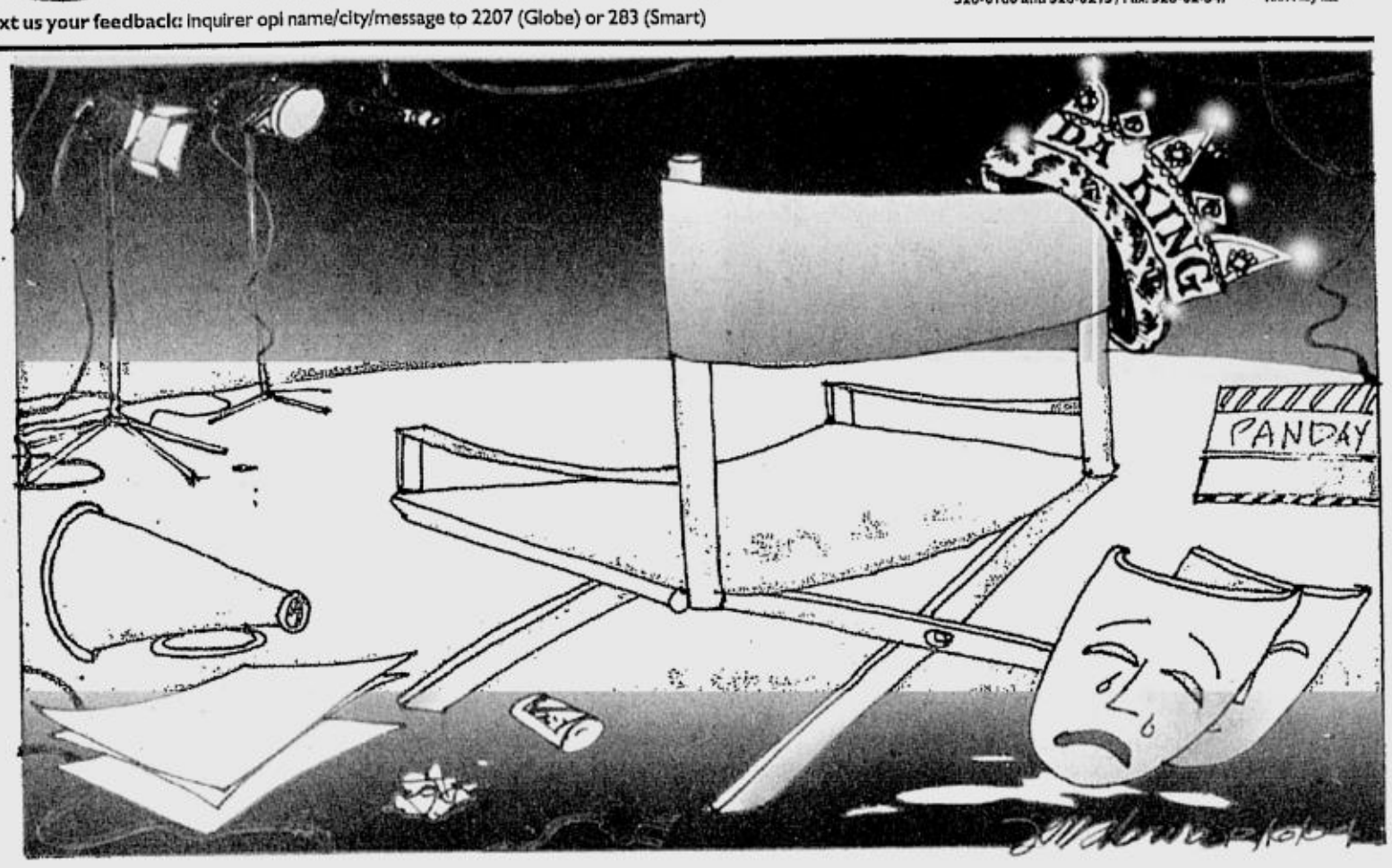

In denial

MALACAÑANG is raising the bogey of a credit downgrade to push Congress into enacting several tax measures, said Sen. Joker Arroyo. The administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo has resorted to this "sickening" tactic of using foreign institutions in order to "achieve what it wants to achieve," he said. "Enough already of the much ballyhooed rating agencies and the impending downgrade . . . its effects have been and are already being felt."

EDITORIAL

Certainly everyone hopes the senator is right. If the recent upsurge in prices, the scaling down of government services and the fall of investments are all we have to endure, we should be grateful already. The 11 professors of the UP School of Economics, followed by other financial analysts both in and outside of government, warned of worse—much worse—things to come if government didn't act quickly enough to control the budget deficit and reduce its P5.4 trillion debt. They saw an Argentina-type financial meltdown, marked by bank runs, runaway inflation, food riots and widespread unrest and violence. And the government had two—at most three—years to act, they said.

Have we headed off the predicted economic disaster in just four months? Senator Arroyo apparently thinks so. That is why he wants Congress to pay no heed to the advice of credit-rating agencies; the imp- -tuning of Malacañang on the tax measures and, of course, the dire warnings of economists. And the miracle is that the threat has passed with hardly anyone lifting a finger to fix the huge budget deficit and the colossal debt yet.

But Senator Arroyo is not the first to arrive at the conclusion that the worst is over. The President beat him to it. After publicly admitting in August that her government was in the midst of a "fiscal crisis," she announced last month that the problem was behind us. And to repeat, nothing had been done yet to address the crisis.

Except talk. There were plenty of proposals to tame the deficit and reduce the debt. The administration sent Congress eight new tax measures to raise added revenues and said it would trim down the bureaucracy, impose limits on the salaries and allowances of executives in government corporations and adopt a number of austerity measures. A number of Filipinos responded by chipping in several millions to a Bayanihan Fund or supporting a fund-raising campaign launched by Catholic Church leaders.

Only the citizens put their money where their mouths were. While a few senators promised to give up their pork barrel, the House of Representatives voted to keep all of the pork Malacañang had tucked into the budget for 2005. When local officials protested that they would be forced to cut back on vital services, the administration quietly dropped the proposal to cut the internal revenue allotments of provincial and municipal governments. In the meantime, Ms Arroyo continued to appoint her staunchest political allies to newly created positions and offices as if the bureaucracy were not already bloated and top-heavy.

As the administration and its allies in Congress went back to business as usual, the citizens gradually found out that they have to bear the whole burden of dealing with the looming financial crisis. Power rates have been raised, along with water rates. The specific taxes on gasoline and other products are being increased. And then there are the eight new taxes Congress is working on, all of which will ultimately be taken from the citizens' pockets. It seems that the idea of sharing the burden, put forward by the 11 UP economists, has been conveniently dropped. Everything is being dumped on the citizenry.

With the President talking and acting as if there was no crisis, should we now believe Senator Arroyo when he dismisses those warnings about a ratings downgrade and its consequences as part of Malacañang's scare tactics? We wish we could. But not even he or the President swearing that no crisis exists or even looms can make that mountain of debt vanish. Neither would it persuade the ratings agencies to change their analyses of the situation nor make foreign investors rush in with their money.

The wide budget deficit and mounting debt need fixing and they cannot be fixed by wishing them away. Revenues have to be raised, fat has to be trimmed, waste has to be cut and corruption has to be checked. That is a tall order for any administration, of course, but the Arroyo administration must do all that to deal with a mountain of a problem.

Dying at the margins

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THE DEATHS and damage inflicted by floods cascading from the Sierra Madres underscore how relentless resource extraction—heedless of the future—created communities of over 26.7 million "core poor" people, who now live and die at the margins of the country's troubled economy.

Ateneo University's "Communities At The Margins" documents how policy, crafted by an "aristocracy of the moneybags," creamed rich fish stocks, extensive mineral deposits and lush timber stands. In the process, it beggared a people and a nation.

This 316-page book presents nine studies on how the poor cope within degraded areas. They include Sierra Madres' "post-logging" groups, Cebu's migrant-fishermen and South Cotabato farmers.

The book's editors are: Germelino Bautista, former Philippine Institute of Culture director, and Hiromitsu Umehara of Rikkyo University. Umehara has written extensively on Philippine landlord-tenant relationships.

Filipino elites manipulated policy, over the decades, to wring from forests, mines and fishing grounds windfall profits. But these were splurged on luxuries, not shared equitably with workers. That guaranteed disaster.

Degraded reefs in the Panay Gulf and Bohol Sea yield only four to five metric tons of fish per square kilometer—compared to their original potential of 15 metric tons, scientists J. H. Primavera and E.D. Gomez note. Once the Philippines' largest marine export item, the almost extinct giant clams were banned for export in 1996.

The Sierra Madres, the Ateneo study notes, was "one of the last forest frontiers." Massive logging began in the early '70s. By then, Mindanao's forests, which once contained the world's best dipterocarp stands, had been chain-sawed to kindling.

In the late 1950s, about 802,000 hectares of forest lands were leased out. By mid-1970s, 10.2 million hectares of forestlands in the Sierra Madres were being logged over.

A skewed tax regime spurred exploitation. Laws offered little incentive for conservation or reinvestment, the Ateneo study notes. Except for low permit fees for commercial fishing and for the export of exotic aquarium species, fish fingerlings were not taxed. Low taxes on mining declined through time.

Loggers got "liberal annual allowable cuts, zero export taxes, declining forest charges that amounted to only 2 to 6 percent of log prices and high protective tariff," it adds.

"State functionaries also provided incentives indirectly by inaction, through the non-enforcement of penalties against logging damages...and illegal logging," a book understatement reads. That's street lingo for *kotong*. No Quezon province cop, for example, would accompany Environment Secretary Michael Defensor's probe into logging firms.

Instead of reinvesting, extractors splurged on luxuries, real estate, bank accounts abroad or "consumer durables"—forerunners for overseas workers' families who rarely invest. Most spend for cell phones, TV, video and motorcycles etc., an Asian Development study shows.

Continued economic viability hinged on "sustainable extraction." New Zealand or Australia invests in tree plantations and are assured of continuing harvests. That did not come to pass here.

"State policy had particular consequences for people." Logging camps, fishing ports and mining towns drew migrant workers. They, in turn, pushed indigenous communities deeper into the interior.

Along the coasts, commercial fishers dislodged small fisherfolk. They "were not literally driven out of their residences, but pushed into greater levels of poverty."

This model enriched those with economic means and political power. But little of the wealth creamed off by fishing magnates, loggers or mining families "trickled down." As Harvard economist John Kenneth Gailbraith wrote, trickle down "is the less than elegant theory that if one feeds the horse enough oats, some will pass through the road for the sparrows."

Massive poverty instead persisted. One out of three families remain impoverished. The "core poor" includes workers, displaced from sunset industries like wood or sugar. They find themselves in households within calamity- or drought-prone areas. These vulnerable areas are without adequate water, sanitation or functioning irrigation systems.

Landless workers drift into towns or cities. Most remain jobless. Rural poverty is swapped for urban slum penury. "Population pressure and ecological degradation have already set the limits of internal migration," the book points out.

Voiceless and disorganized, they "burst from obscurity into TV screens only when their communities slip over the ecological cliff," the late Asian forester Sudhakar Rao wrote after mudfloods hit Southern Thailand and Ormoc.

The current debate focuses on who's to blame for Quezon's floods. That's irrelevant to a Philippines already mired in a "post-logging" era. Loggers are merely wiping out the last timber remnants. One of yesterday's wood prima-donnas, our country is among today's timber paupers.

In that poor house, policy must give priority to "those who have existed in the shadows of growth," Bautista and Umehara write. Needed is a strong national government and a local-level leadership that transcend politics to reconstitute community life. Otherwise, people will continue to live and die "at the margins of the Philippine political economy."

* * *

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Da King is dead, long live Da King

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I HEARD about it last Sunday from a friend. Fernando Poe Jr. keeled over the night before and was rushed to St. Luke's. His condition was critical. While at the hospital, he had a seizure and went into a coma. By nightfall, he was on life support. It was just a question of when they would pull the plug.

This is a horrible year. At about the same time last Monday, our friend William Chua, a human rights lawyer and a partner in Haydee Yorac's law firm, also died. His death was not as sudden as FPJ's, but it was sudden by most other standards. He had a check-up early this year after feeling out of sorts, and was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer at a fairly advanced stage. He was given months to live. He died a couple of hours earlier than FPJ. He was 48.

But I'll put off my elegy for William and look at FPJ first. There is no small irony in FPJ going ahead of his buddy, Joseph Estrada. I remember writing several columns in jest before the 1998 elections saying the best position to run for was vice president. That was so, I said, because given Erap's state of health and his propensity to ruin it some more by drink and *lechon* (I don't know if sleeping around ruins or improves health), I wasn't sure he would finish his term.

Little did I realize how true that would be, though for quite different reasons. Erap would truly not finish his term, but not for failing health. Even less did I realize the vice president would take his place, only to proceed to ruin the health of her country.

But the bigger irony is that during the last elections people worried not over FPJ's health but over Raul Roco's. Roco had to fly to the United States in the thick of the campaign to seek emergency treatment for a recurrence of prostate cancer. I saw him last Saturday at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani, and he couldn't have been healthier or more energetic. He radiated amiability and good cheer.

In any case, I've never thought voting on the basis of a person's health was a wise thing to do. You want to vote wisely, vote on the basis of a person's mental and moral health, not his physical one. A good leader who serves for a short time is always preferable to a bad leader who serves for a long time. The first is bliss, the second is hell.

I don't know that I would have liked to have FPJ as my president. But I do know he was not the greater evil and GMA the lesser one in the elections, which is how GMA sold herself. If the choice were merely between GMA and FPJ (and it was never so), I'd pick FPJ anytime. A person with a good heart who means well, however he doesn't know the first thing about government, is infinitely better than a person with a good head who means ill, however she sandpapers things with PR. Intelligence is not a boon to the nation if it resides in the head of a hustler. It is a bane to it.

I already said my piece there during the campaign, and it is to FPJ's credit that he never took the things I said against him against me. On the one occasion I spoke to him before the elections, he never brought it up. He only thanked me for saying that when I was a kid I thrilled to see him play Daniel Barrion in the movies. He didn't know too many people who still remembered Daniel Barrion, much less saw his movies about Daniel Barrion. Most people remembered only Asedillo and Ang Panday. He spoke softly, much as he did in his movies, before the thugs pushed him to the wall and he defended himself with fast gun and flying fists. He was a gracious man, a monumental virtue in these ungracious times.

In any case, none of our objections to his presidential bid may allow us to slip FPJ surreptitiously into the footnotes of history, as a cultural icon that made the mistake of plunging into politics in the twilight of his career. I say this in particular because I've heard a number of people say, "*Buti na lang*, FPJ didn't become president or else we would now have Noli de Castro, or worse, Loren Legarda, for president!"

Well, maybe that would be a worse pass, but that doesn't excuse the silence of the Edsa I and II forces, notably civil society, in the face of GMA bankrupting government to campaign. That doesn't excuse the silence of the Edsa I and II forces, notably civil society, in the face of the statistical improbability that was the Cebu results. That doesn't excuse the silence of the Edsa I and II forces, notably civil society, in the face of the blatant efforts of the Commission on Elections and Congress to substitute their will for that of the voting public.

And all this presumably to prevent the "greater evil" from becoming president. That succeeded only in assuring the greater evil truly would. A greater evil that includes the Edsa I and II forces, including civil society, conspiring to thwart the sovereign will. I don't know that FPJ, and not GMA, won the elections. I do know the process was raped thoroughly. I cannot fault the majority of Filipinos who, if Ibon and SWS are to be believed, are convinced the wrong president sits in Malacañang. I was not one of those who wanted FPJ to be president, but that is neither here nor there. How the people actually voted is the only thing that matters. That is what elections are for. That is what democracy is for.

What irony that FPJ should be felled at the very time he was buckling down for a long fight for recognition as the rightful tenant of the house by the Pasig. I'm glad at least his supporters are determined to pick up the cudgels for him. Meanwhile, I grieve with the rest of them and go to bury a president.

The King is dead, long live Da King.

* * *

Just a reminder: Our benefit for the victims of the storms is on Dec. 20 at Conspiracy Café along Visayas Avenue. We'll start early, at 8 p.m., *nang makarami*. Eight to *sawa*, of course.

Unfair to FPJ

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

I NEVER had the opportunity of meeting Fernando Poe Jr. personally when he was alive. But from what I have read and heard about him in death, he was obviously one of the most loved Filipinos. Perhaps, it was the aura of sincerity and simplicity he projected—he seemed like a very gentle person. But I think it is wrong to say that what killed him was his grief over his election loss after having been allegedly cheated out of victory last May, as detained President Estrada is trying to make us believe.

In the first place, that loss was seven months ago. Secondly, it was obvious from the beginning that FPJ never relished being a candidate; he was just forced to run for president by opposition leaders who thought they didn't have any other viable candidate. It was evident especially toward the homestretch of the campaign that he couldn't physically hack the rigors of politics. After the elections, FPJ certainly didn't look angry over his defeat; in fact, he seemed relieved. As his widow Susan Roces put it, FPJ's death may have been caused by hereditary factors; to blame that to his loss in the elections is to be untruthful and unfair to him.

* * *

Two things must be emphasized. First, our water supply in Metro Manila may be reaching a precarious level, with the damaged 13-km tunnel which brings water from the Umiray River in Aurora-Quezon to Angat Dam still to be repaired. The tunnel was badly damaged by the onrush of logs during the recent typhoons and it is not sure if the repair could be done in the next few weeks. The public is requested to conserve water, and there are practical ways of doing this, as the INQUIRER editorial noted. Among them: by using pails, not hoses, when washing cars; and turning off faucets when soaping one's face or brushing the teeth. Let's also inspect our water systems for leaks and dripping faucets.

Second, traffic in the metropolis has become very horrendous. But if you notice, this is due to the swerving of buses in the mall areas. If the Metro Manila Development Authority can bring back its once-effective campaign to limit buses to the yellow lanes (whatever happened to it?) and penalize swerving, then traffic in Metro Manila would become tolerable even during this Christmas season. Paging MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando.

* * *

In the recent media briefing on the 18th corporate survey conducted by the Wallace Business Forum, WBF president Peter Wallace stressed the importance of consistent policies and of honoring contracts in attracting foreign investors. "You can't invest in a country for 50 years where the policy will change every two or three years," he said. He added that the recent reversal by the Supreme Court of its earlier decision to nullify the Mining Act of 1995 is a sign that the SC has realized that it has to "minimize judicial intervention in legitimate business operations." Wallace also scored the bureaucratic red tape in setting up new businesses, despite the President's pledge to minimize them. About a dozen forms need to be filled out here, he said, compared to Australia's two forms. "It's complexity that drives businesses underground, when what you want is for them to surface, so that they can be taxed," he said.

* * *

Wallace noted that another factor that frightens foreign businessmen is the corruption here. Obviously determined to curb this problem, the Arroyo administration has stepped up its war against technical smuggling, which has been a subject of many complaints from foreign investors for sometime. In connection with this, I note the recent ad—signed by eight leaders of business alliances, among them former Sen. Wigberto Tañada, lead convenor of the Fair Trade Alliance—lauding GMA's reactivation of the National Anti-Smuggling Task Force under Secretary Angelo Reyes. Now let's see some real teeth put into that task force.

* * *

Wallace also emphasized the increasing importance of the English language, noting that allied IT businesses, such as the call centers, backroom services and medical transcription, are gathering steam here. I recall how President Macapagal-Arroyo, in her recent meeting with INQUIRER officials and staff, expressed her pleasure in inaugurating a call center in Dumaguete City. Wallace, however, said that RP lost its competitive edge in English some years back due to some foggy nationalistic notions; but it has to recover that edge, as the demand for people well-versed in English is fast increasing. He noted that a new call center plans to put up 2,000 seats, but it only has a take-up rate of 2 percent.

* * *

Earlier, I wrote that these IT service industries ought to be encouraged as they involve high-tech training for our people who are able to get well-paying jobs here; as a result, they don't have to go hunting for jobs abroad. I'm also glad to note that our colleges and universities are riding on this demand and are striking up partnerships with the concerned industries.

For instance, Dr. Elizabeth Quirino-Lahoz, president of the Technological Institute of the Philippines, told me recently that TIP's "strategic focus" is to strengthen its orientation as a technological school. Toward this end, it has introduced many new courses in information and communication technology. Its latest academic program, offered only at TIP, is the four-year Bachelor of Science in Commerce, major in Logistics Management. It's an academic-industry partnership between TIP and Transprocure, a global procurement services company that provides the technical teacher-training assistance for TIP's new program. Dr. Lahoz pointed out that graduates of this logistics program could go into many fields, not the least of which are business processes outsourcing and customer care and service.

'Sick of the Times'

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

A WEEPY week it could have been, what with William Chua leaving for the Great Courtroom in the Sky. Sure this is a time for weeping, but this is also a time for celebrating a great life. A great friend of 25 years William was to me and many others who had pen as weapon and to his fellow human rights lawyers who knew what a good fight meant. (See yesterday's INQUIRER front-page news story, "Human rights champion William Chua dies; 49")

William passed away in the evening of Dec. 13 after a six-month battle with pancreatic cancer which he faced with vigor and grace. He spent his last few days at St. Luke's Hospital where there was a big commotion because movie king Fernando Poe Jr. was there lying comatose after suffering a stroke. (FPJ died Tuesday, a minute after midnight.) One had to wade through the endless stream of cars and the throng of fans and politicians. Parking was a nightmare. Oh God, I thought, would I ever get there? I did and by the time I left, the crowd had thickened.

The scene outside was surreal. Inside, in his own little space, warmed by soft lights and the prayers of family and friends around him, William waited, then gently slipped away and passed on to the Great Beyond.

My story yesterday said that William was the anonymous publisher/editor of the well-remembered "Sick of the Times" that spoofed and satirized the excesses of the Marcos dictatorship through jokes, essays and illustrations. Okay, I will now confess that I was one of the cub writers. The rest will have to remain unknown. But why will I not reveal that PCGG head and recent Magsaysay Awardee Haydee Yorac, William's UP law professor then, also wrote for "Sick"?

I still have copies of the second and third "Sick" issues. I'm looking for the first issue because that was where, I think, the languorous "The Autumn of the Patriarch" came out. It was a take-off from Gabriel Garcia Marquez's novel about an ailing despot whose regime and body were slowly being corrupted.

No one knew if an issue would be the last so it had, near the masthead, "Volume One, Only One."

The June 1981 issue had for its banner "Luzon mortgaged." The lead paragraph: "The US State Department today announced its acceptance of the Philippine government's offer to pledge the island of Luzon as security for its mounting foreign debts which as of March 1981 stood at $13.1 billion.

"Two real estate agents from Beverly Hills have been dispatched by Washington to sign the deed of mortgage. They will be met at the airport by Foreign Minister and designer-jeans tycoon Carlo Roma and his beautiful wife...Later in the evening, the two guests will be feted on board the presidential yacht RPS Sex-sex-sex. The sleek boat was reportedly donated by a Japanese sex tour operator."

Meanwhile..."Angarbo Angarapal became the 14th president of the University of the Foolipines following a protracted tsu-tsu struggle between equally talented sycophants..."

But the side-splitting stuff were the trivia, letters to the editor, ads, comics and announcements. "Try New Improved Boycott. Helps Relieve Dictatorship Pains." "Gagong Lipunan Government Primer" lists the government ministries with their logos and services:

"Ministry of Public Information-government agency hostile to facts. Training ground of the country's leading fiction writers.

"National Bureau of Investigation—otherwise known as the Malacañang Garden Society because of its penchant for planting evidence as in the case of Quintero and Climaco."

The Ministry of Settlements was "shittlements" and the New Society motto "Higit sa Lahat Tao" became "Higit sa lahat tae."

Among "Kasey Sakim's 20 Greatest Hits of the New Society" were "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" by the NPA Concert Chorus; "You Light Up My Life" by Ed Olaguer and the Matchsticks (remember the Light-a-Fire Movement?); "First of May" by Lando Olalia and the KMU Orchestra; "I've Got You Under My Skin" by Ferdie and the Lupus; "Leaving on a Jet Plane" by the Dewey Dee and Fluvio Magpayo Duet. And many more.

The hit song "We are the World (USA for Africa)" was rewritten as "We are the World (US-Aid Appearka)."

Read any good papers lately? "Read Daily Eggless, Bulshittin Today and Tame Journal."

A warning notice: "*Mag-ingat sa* ASSO: The rabid truth about *tutas* in the Armed Forces."

When I thought my house might be "visited," I kept my stack of "Sick" copies in a very unlikely storage spot. When the military came to search for persons and publications, they found nothing.

Once a huffing William arrived somewhere saying he almost drove right smack into a military search operation somewhere with his car full of "Sick." He was paper white.

The last issue, named "Nineteen Eighty Sick," came out during the 1986 snap elections. The headline: "Imelda declines VP slot." Below it was "Psychic sees FM win." On the last page was Marcos' last will and testament.

"I, Ferdinand E. Marcos, of legal age, married to Imelda Romualdez, being of sound and disposing mind, do by these presents declare this to be my last will and testament which I have caused to be written in the King's English, a language which is known to me and better left alone by my wife..."

William was ready to go and, I was told, that at some point he even looked forward to that wondrous moment. "God loves me," he would say. But he loved his family so much he wished he could be around for Christmas.

During our last face-to-face talk, long before he lapsed into a pain-free sleep, I asked him how he would describe his life. William answered: "There was no space left unfilled."

* * *

Send comments to ceresрd@info.com.ph

Eclipse

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

SUCH a private man was he that no one will ever truly know whether he died of a broken heart due to politics, as Imee Marcos suspects; or from an overdose of thrill and joy in watching Manny Pacquiao's victory which, I think, was more the likely cause. One thing is certain though: his death—so sudden, though a merciful way to go for so proud and strong a man—has shaken the political landscape. He was the sun around which show business revolved for two generations; he was, too, the lodestar of a political opposition that never quite knew what to do with him. Fernando Poe Jr. is gone, and his loyal fans and his political allies—the true and the fair-weather ones—are in darkness.

I never met FPJ, but I have met his wife, of whom it must be said there are few women in the Philippines or anywhere who can match her charm, grace, dignity and class. It was—is—by her that much of her husband's character could be measured. If he was the personification of so much that Filipino men want to be, she is everything a Filipino man would want in a wife: a loyal, tactful, loving, protective and strong spouse. FPJ, by all accounts, was a demanding man, requiring discipline and professionalism in work, and expecting respect both for himself, his wife, his fellow workers, friends and fans. The quiet strengths of his character was matched by hers, and it is to her and her sense of what her husband wanted—and what he posthumously deserves—that so many are turning to at this time. It is no exaggeration to say that as she comes to term with private grief, so must she grapple with the political consequences of his passing.

In an editorial, Today newspaper observed that the grief of Poe's fans will be made desperate, even dangerous, by a feeling of guilt for allowing their idol to lose the May 2004 election. There is much truth in this. At the time of his candidacy, I pointed out that FPJ's candidacy represented a popular yearning for leadership in a traditional mold, one which aspired for a kind of telepathic connection between leaders and those they lead. A leadership that understood the yearning for strength, for a strong will, tempered by compassion and, most of all, for a healthy respect for the least who make up the most. His candidacy was not of the stupid leading the blind, as many of his opponents wanted to portray it. It was, at worst, of the idealistic leading the naïve, insisting that the only qualifications for national leadership were the simple constitutional requirements of age, literacy, birth and citizenship. At best, his candidacy was based on the premise that the politics of division and cynical spin-doctoring could be replaced by the politics of unity and populism, in its positive sense, thus bringing back the government to the people.

The people yearn for a reconnection between those who govern and the governed. After having a brief taste of it, they wanted more; the country requires that it move forward. Did FPJ gamble on the fact that this primal connection between himself and his fans would carry the day? I think so. And surely he had hoped that the politicians swarming around him would see—as he so clearly saw—that the country needed order and unity. In his mind, the two were indivisible, inseparable: that is how he had lived his life, according to the principles of order and unity. But the politicians didn't see it; even if they did, they just paid it lip-service, when they weren't busy jockeying for advantage. This obviously disgusted a man whose show business success was achieved through the combination of hard work, instinctive marketing and positioning, and stacking the odds. He had everything going for him, except unity among his political operatives. There was also a line he would not cross: he would not act ungentlemanly, he would not unleash the mob; he tried mightily to maintain his tight self-control, and was ashamed when he'd lose his temper in public or see the chaos within his campaign.

His opponents were more united, more disciplined, more orderly and completely shameless in fighting him. The man who wanted to lead a positive campaign found his campaign sinking beneath the weight of the disloyalty, greed, disunity and disorder of his political allies; and the mercenary tendencies of an electorate so impoverished, it couldn't muster the means to arm their idol with the antidote: their honest votes and the defense of those votes. Their frenzy at the hustlings didn't translate into a tidal wave at the polls.

The same frenzy was there when he lost, but he shrank, as he'd always shrunk, from unleashing the worst inclinations of the dispossessed. The same frenzy is there in the hotheads who tore apart the presidential wreath at his wake, and in the mutterings of politicians who contributed to his defeat but want to maximize the political fallout from his death. Order and unity is what Poe's candidacy was about, and what his life, in his chosen field, had achieved. I said he was a conservative man, and I meant it in the best sense of the word: he cherished hard work, he valued his property, he was proud of his career, he paid his debts of honor and gratitude. And he was that profoundly old-fashioned type of man, the kind who both demanded respect and gave it. The final—political—tragedy of his life was the tragedy of his people, played in his unfortunate political fate: good intentions, a strong will, a life of achievement are, all too often, not enough. At his wake, pickpockets are at work, tarnishing in death what he so strongly wanted in life: dignity for everybody.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph

When nature strikes

YOUNG BLOOD

Chloe Nina L. Ballesteros

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

MY cousin Eric and I decided to spend the long weekend (thanks to the angry weather) playing cards and straining our eyes in a seemingly endless film marathon. While supertyphoon "Yoyong" was wreaking havoc in Aurora and Quezon, we who were just mounds of land away were busy munching on Boy Bawang with our eyes fixed on the 14-inch idiot box. While people were being buried alive in some parts of the country, we were being couch potatoes watching the devastation in New York caused by the unexpected catastrophe of a "sudden shift of climate" in "The Day After Tomorrow."

Ironic? Downright unfair? Honestly, I've been starting to look at life in this light lately. Ironic, unfair—no question about it, life is like that. In fact, it has always been that way. It's just that it has started making this side of it more felt lately.

I should put more emphasis on the this-side-of-life part of my previous statement, though. I mean, life is unfair all right but it is not just that. It offers more, both positive and negative. Remember life is a paradox. What I mean is that it is weirdly capable of presenting two extremely contradictory stuff that make us, creatures, see the contradiction, which in turn drives us to the edge of our sanity because it completely boggles our mind to deal with questions like: How come I feel this urge to do something to help victims of the super typhoon and I feel like I'm committing a crime sitting here seemingly content in the company of Boy Bawang, and yet I continue to do nothing? I want to be relieved of this burden of sympathy that is so great that it hurts.

No, I think I made a mistake. Maybe life is not unfair after all. It may be cruel sometimes, but then being cruel doesn't always mean being unfair, right? You see, perhaps life is devoted to the ancient code. Maybe it follows strictly the part of the code that demands an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. No kidding. Maybe life has a religion. And unfortunately (for us at least), in life's religion, the code is taken seriously.

Now let's consider this and look at life in this light. Maybe life, for some reasons I can't figure out at the moment, graciously allowed us to experience it and, with that privilege, comes an acquaintance with nature, which in turn bargains with us and allows us to have everything we want that it has and can give for some price (just like a high-class courtesan). And what could be the price? Refer to life's religion. Bottom line: We have to treat nature kindly—or else.

At this point, I admit I'm quite confused by my own exposition that I won't feel offended in the least if you would admit that we are on the same boat. But let me assure you that you'll get something here. It may not be something grand, but I tell you it's definitely something important. So please read on.

Life may sound like a paradox. Again I'm debunking my earlier statement saying that life is a paradox. This time, I would like to rephrase what I said and say that it may sound like one but it is not exactly so. Definitely not as far as the situation that makes me feel guilty is concerned.

You see, I think life and nature share a very special bond. They may be in some sort of a relationship. I don't have any idea whether the relationship is platonic or romantic, simple or complicated or whether it is an arrangement between equals or one is superior to the other. But definitely it is an important relationship. The relationship is valuable to both parties.

Which probably explains the catastrophe that hits us humans whenever we exploit nature. Or to put it figuratively, when we mercilessly rape it. I mean nature may be a prostitute that welcomes everyone and allows all to use it, but even prostitutes are entitled to their own choices, right?

And then there's life which values nature. Life considers nature as something important. And when one looks at something as important, we can never know to what extent it will go to protect or avenge that something. And life has a religion.

If this is not so, I can think of only one possibility that may explain why I was sitting on a couch munching on Boy Bawang while others were being buried alive just a few mounds of land away. Perhaps, it is indeed true that there is a God.

Chloe Nina L. Ballesteros, 20, is a Communication Arts graduate of the University of the Philippines and currently teaching English and literary subjects in a state university.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

If you are sending your contributions by e-mail, please address it to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address and information about your age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with.

THEY SAID

Recycled wishes

"The people deserve more from this government than cheesy and recycled Christmas wishes."

—Renato Reyes, secretary general of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, on the government's statements that one can still have a happy Christmas if he or she does not look just for material things

Crucifying acts

"It's like being crucified."

—Comedienne Tessie Tomas on live comedy acts

The worst

"I have been a commissioner for 21 years, this is the worst game I have ever seen, period."

—National Basketball Association commissioner David Stern, after suspending Indiana Pacers player Ron Artest who started a melee between players and Detroit Pistons supporters

The best

"But I cannot allow personal friendship and *utang na loob* (personal debt) to color my judgment on who is best for the university."

—University of the Philippines president Francisco Nemenzo on voting for Emerlinda Roman as the next UP president instead of his friend and Malacañang candidate Edgardo Espiritu

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Possession of chainsaws should be regulated

LETTERS PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

IN THE WAKE of the environmental disaster in Quezon, Aurora and Nueva Ecija, President Macapagal-Arroyo likened illegal logging to a heinous crime and, immediately suspended commercial logging indefinitely. Sen. Aquilino Pimentel announced he would file a bill prescribing a total log ban for 25 years. A congressional committee just approved a total log ban.

However, these laudable measures would not be successful if the chainsaw—that simple but awesome machine that efficiently denuded our mountains these past years—will not be criminalized.

The chainsaw is really a deadly weapon. Deadlier than a machine gun. Unlike a handgun, a chainsaw doesn't have to be registered and licensed in order to be legally possessed and carried. I bet that in Quezon Province alone, there are at least half a dozen chainsaws for every *barangay*. I am from Quezon.

The chainsaw must be criminalized. It is imperative that the President issue immediately an executive order regulating the possession of chainsaws and that Congress, as soon as possible, enact a law making the unlawful possession of a chainsaw punishable.

The mere possession of a chainsaw should be prima facie evidence of illegal logging, which now should be made a heinous crime, as properly suggested by the President. This is one rare occasion wherein the President is assured of clear support from the public. Environment Secretary Mike Defensor and anti-logging czar Victor Corpus should resign if they do not agree with President Arroyo.

—NELSON D. LAVIÑA, nlavina@lycos.com

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

PRC must remain regulatory body for medical practice

EVERYBODY knows that the medical profession in the Philippines is in serious peril of losing its doctors with more and more of them going to the United States, United Kingdom and other countries to work as nurses. If this trend continues, the planned universal PhilHealth coverage of all Filipinos will certainly be derailed before it can take off.

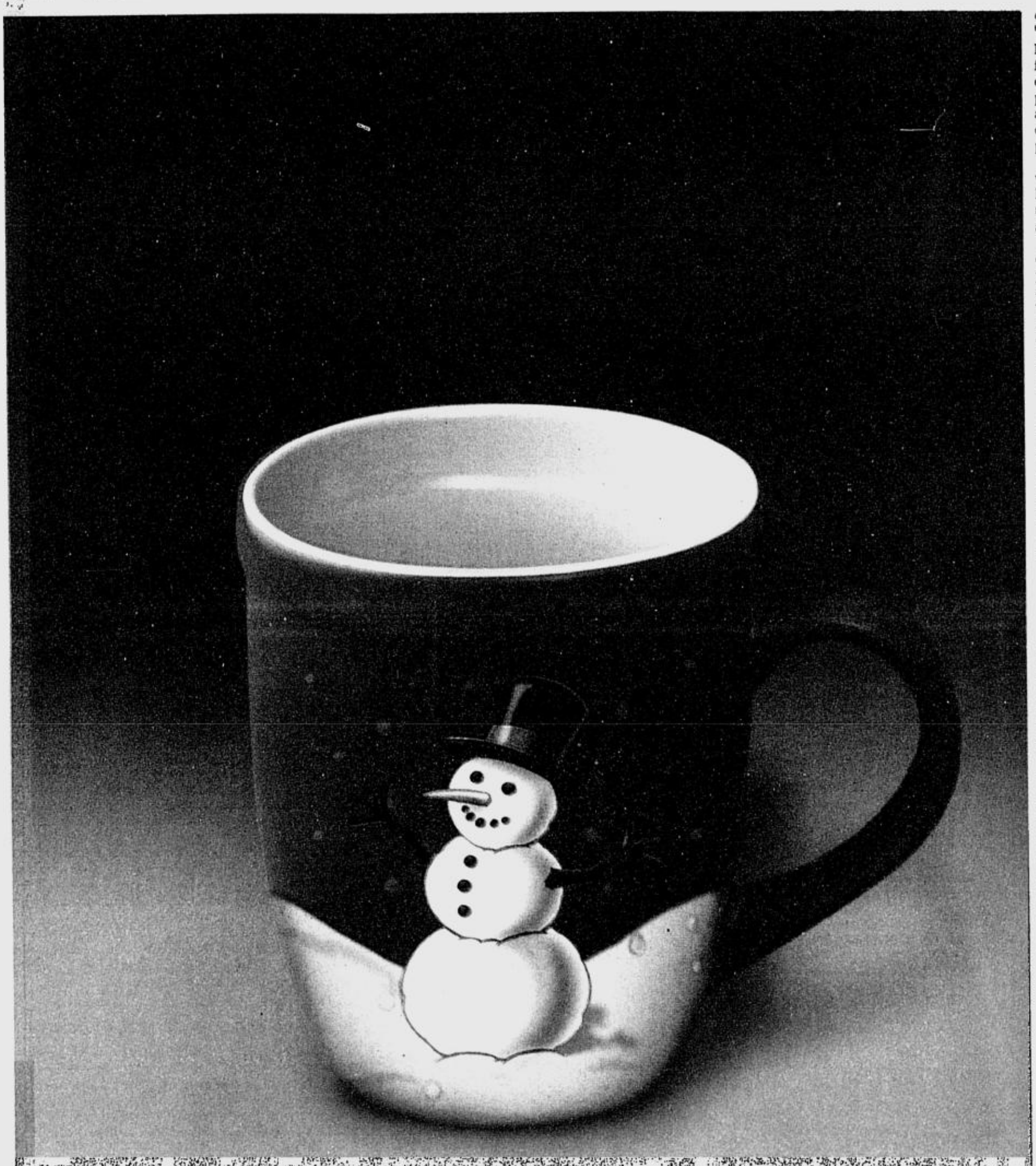
Aggravating this situation is the excessive politicking and jockeying for national positions in the country's largest private medical organization. Instead of spending time and resources to promote personal agenda, its leaders should work for higher salaries and other incentives like health insurance for doctors in both private and public hospitals. They should lobby for bigger benefits and incentives so that our physicians will no longer aspire to go abroad to look for greener pastures and instead opt to render medical service in far-flung areas in the country.

Politics in this medical association is a real problem that must be solved. Members whom they consider as threats to its leadership are stricken off the membership roll and voters' list of the organization without due process even if they are life-time members. Those who do not agree with the leaders' political agenda are denied a certificate of good standing and, as a result, find difficulty in obtaining PhilHealth accreditation for themselves and their patients, thus delaying and hampering the delivery of medical services.

The Department of Health should act to prevent these abuses and virtual blackmail of doctors by those controlling this medical association in the country. A bill in Congress seeks to make this private organization the regulatory body for medical practitioners in the Philippines. The bill should not be passed. The Professional Regulation Commission should retain its power to regulate medical practice in our country. Giving power to this unscrupulous, corrupt private body will be disastrous to Filipino medical practitioners.

It's about time that the health secretary, the PRC commissioner and the directors of other concerned government agencies step in, look into and act on the abusive behavior of these selfish medical politicos whose behavior only stimulates further swelling of the exodus of Filipino medical professionals to foreign lands.

—JAIME M. DURAN, M.D., PRC License No. 43214, vice president, Rizal Medical Society Inc., jimmy_duran@lycos.com



Starvation knows no law

HOW can the government agencies be more efficient and responsive when the real workhorses—the seasoned casual and contractual employees—are being terminated in the name of austerity? Moreover, laying them off runs counter to President Macapagal-Arroyo's 10-point agenda, specifically on job generation.

The dismissal of these employees, many of whom carry with them unstained records of loyal public service covering 10-15 consecutive years, is an act of heartlessness, cruelty and injustice.

For the families of these affected loyal and dedicated employees—like those of the Department of Public Works and Highways who are reportedly scheduled to be given their walking papers by the end of December 2004—it will mean financial crisis. And this could lead to a worsening of the country's peace and order situation and pull the popularity of the President and the government further down.

Worst of all, the dismissed casual employees, most of whom are poor, could only be welcome addition to the insurgency movement. This would be so because starvation knows no law, deprivation knows no mercy, acute depression knows no respect. This is not to sow fear, but this scenario is not a remote possibility.

We urge President Arroyo to exercise her heart for the poor government workers.

—ROMY V. LOFAMIA, L-18 B-65, Haring Constantino St., Barangay Greater Lagro, Novaliches, Quezon City

No chemical poisoning

THIS is in reaction to the article, "The chronicler of Wilkie's slow death," (PDI, 12/8/04) on the late Wilkie Duran Monte, a former employee of Lazi Bay Resources Development Inc. (LBRDI) at Lazi, Siquijor.

LBRDI hired Monte on May 20, 1996 as a laborer, among the first 20 employees who were assigned at the improvised batching plant. On May 25, 1998, Monte was transferred to a drilling-and-blasting job as an equipment operator. Some time in 1998, Monte started to get sick. In January 2000, he was confined at the Siquijor Provincial Hospital and later brought to the Silliman University Medical Center (SUMC) in Dumaguete City.

The medical reports of Dr. Franco L. Arcamo, municipal health officer of Siquijor, and Dr. Shireen U. Teves, dermatologist of SUMC, on the cause of Monte's death disprove the claim that he died of chemical poisoning.

After medical examinations at the Siquijor hospital and SUMC, Monte was diagnosed with Hansen's disease or leprosy. Chemical poisoning was never mentioned in his medical records. The other workers who were with Monte during the construction stage, aside from LBRDI's first 20, are still alive and do not have any complaint about chemical poisoning.

LBRDI is a legitimate business entity with a duly approved Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA), issued by two environment secretaries, and a BOI registration.

We are convinced that the ultimate goal of Republic Act 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 is to institutionalize a culture of safety that is characterized by a well-informed workforce, and to encourage the mining industry to continually upgrade its safety standards, committed to achieving a zero-accident industry.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau supports the continuing effort to promote the industry's level of understanding and awareness of the issues, needs and concerns of local communities. We subscribe to the belief that community issues are best expressed by the concerned communities themselves.

MGB in Region 7 has been monitoring LBRDI's compliance with existing mining requirements, particularly on safety, health and environment protection. When potentially upsetting activities are observed, the company is asked to institute corrective or rehabilitative measures.

MGB is committed to the development of mineral resources in a transparent and sustainable manner, in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations, industry guidelines and corporate responsibility. It is committed to the highest technical standards, management systems and practices. We will not hesitate to crack the whip where principles and policies of responsible mining are breached.

—ROGER A. DE DIOS, officer in charge, Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Regional Office 7, Banilad, Mandaue City

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Funding for Sierra Madre withdrawn

ILAGAN, Isabela—The lack of commitment among local and national officials to pursue a forest conservation project in Isabela has prompted the government of The Netherlands to stop its funding support for the project, an official of an environmental group involved in the project said.

Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan, president of the World Wide Fund for Nature-Philippines, said the Royal Netherlands government had withdrawn its funding support for the P578-million Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park Conservation, Preservation and Development (NSMNPCPD).

"The reason is very complex. They (the Royal Netherlands government representatives) said they had been there for eight years now but no national and local executives had been pouring all-out commitment (to the project)," Tan said.

The Plan International undertook the first phase of the project while the WWF-Philippines implemented its second phase in 2001.

The 359,486-hectare natural park straddles Dinapigue, Palanan, Maconacon, Divilacan, San Mariano, Ilagan, San Pablo, Cabagan, Sta. Maria and Tumauini towns.

The park is home to at least 5,000 Dumagats and Agtas, who mostly depend on hunting and fishing for a living.

Tan said the effort of the WWF-Philippines in the project hinges on the multi-sector stakeholders' commitment to the project.

"Conservation of biodiversity requires diverse actions by many players, the stakeholders in the area," he said. "Working hard is not enough. We need to produce results. The details of the exit plan are still being drafted."

He said the project would end in the next three months.

"This will be a speedy exit. It will be finished within the first semester next year," he said.

He, however, said there are plans to propose the project to other foreign governments and organizations interested in supporting environment conservation and development.

The WWF-Philippines, Tan said, will continue its environment conservation project in Palawan. "The Palawan project is a different case. It has a different funding so it will go on," he said.

Felix Taguba, provincial environment and natural resources officer, assailed the WWF-Philippines for implementing "less-tangible projects" and for ignoring the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in its activities.

"There are not much tangible projects they have implemented. The sad thing is they almost always bypass the DENR in implementing their activities. They hardly coordinate with us and that is lamentable," Taguba said.

Park development projects were also implemented within top-level management and these did not create an impact on the community, he said.

Isabela Rep. Edwin Uy said he would start a legislative inquiry into the withdrawal of the funding support.

"We will look deeper into this unfortunate development. We have to study, assess and analyze the reason why this happened," he said.

Uy, who supports a total log ban, said the province should be protected from flash floods and landslides. Uy and Rep. Anthony Miranda earlier asked the DENR to cancel the timber license agreements (TLAs), including permits under integrated forest management agreements (Ifma), covering a large portion of the Sierra Madre mountains in the province. *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Ecija onion growers reel from smuggling, rains

By Anselmo Roque
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CABANATUAN CITY—Thousands of onion growers in Nueva Ecija, already complaining about losses due to the ill effects of onion smuggling, suffered another round of losses because of the recent flash floods and rains that hit Central Luzon.

In Bongabon town, dubbed as the "onion basket of the Philippines," Mayor Amelia Gamilla said 130 hectares of land planted to onions in their bulbing stage were destroyed by floods.

Gamilla said onion seedlings intended to be planted to 1,300 hectares of land in her town were also wiped out.

She said the onion plants in her town were damaged by floods triggered by Typhoon "Violeta." Succeeding floods in her town triggered by tropical depression Winnie and Typhoon "Yoyong" destroyed the plants.

She said losses in onion and other crops, which included hybrid corn, reached P45 million.

Of the 9,200 hectares usually used for onion growing in Nueva Ecija yearly, Bongabon reports an average growing area of about 2,800 hectares, most of which are planted to the red creole variety.

The other onion variety, the yellow grannex, is planted in other towns in Nueva Ecija.

The onion is a crop easily destroyed by rains. That is why growers normally start the culture period late November or early December when the rainy season normally ends.

Wanting to harvest early to earn more, many growers practice the *palusot* (off-season) planting. Onion harvest floods the market during the Christmas season because of the *palusot* planting.

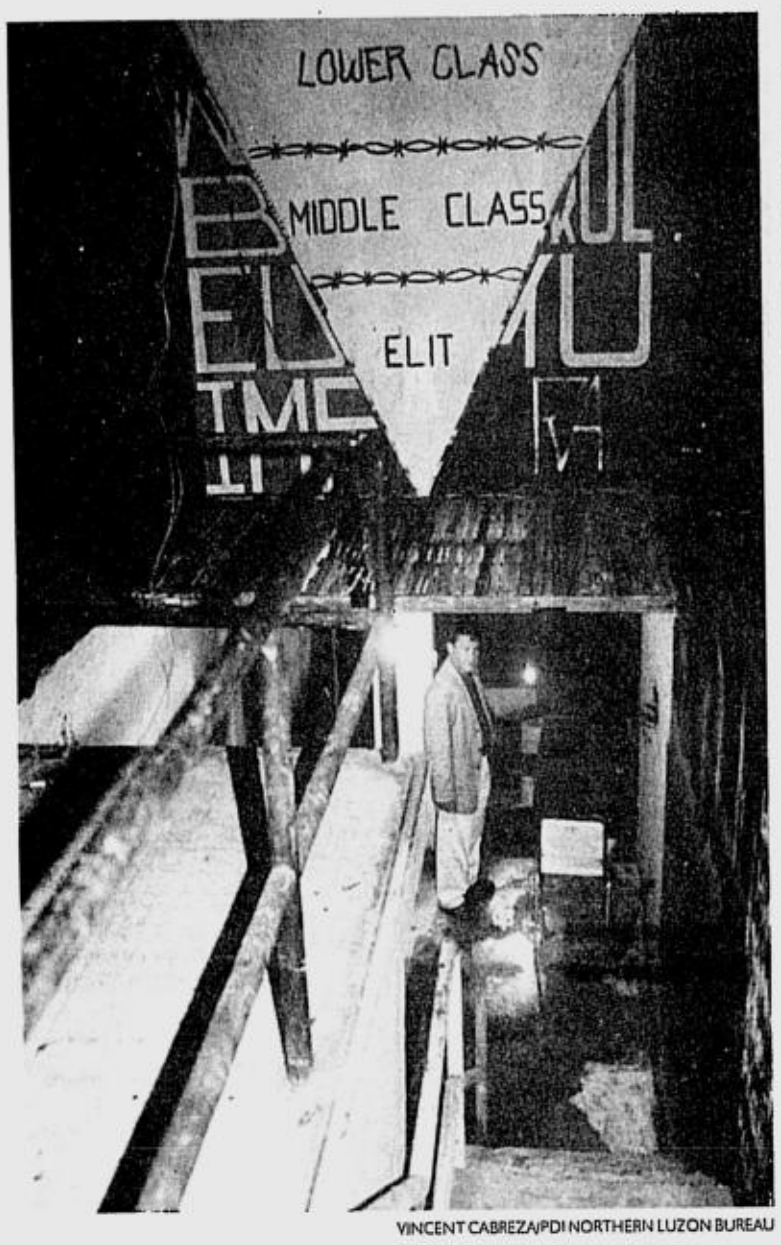
Otherwise, the peak of the onion harvest comes between February and March.

Onion growers in other towns and cities of Nueva Ecija who planted early also said they suffered losses due to the recent typhoons.

The growers are from San Jose City and Rizal town, which have a combined growing area of 2,500 hectares; Laur and Gabaldon towns, with a growing area of more than 700 hectares each; and 17 other towns, whose growing area is 500 hectares or less.

During good harvest, onion growers can expect a net profit of at least P70,000 per hectare. Good harvest means at least 14 tons production per hectare and a buying price of P10 a kilogram.

Next to rice, onion is considered a billion-peso industry in Nueva Ecija. Onion harvest in the province accounts for 95 percent of the onion harvest in the country.



VINCENT CABREZA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

THE BASEMENT of the Baguio Convention Center floods every day. This section was designed to hold a hydraulic platform that would raise Soviet grandmaster Karpov and dissident grandmaster Fischer during their 1978 match. The hydraulics didn't work.

Baguio left holding decrepit structure

BAGUIO CITY—Officials here are taking a second look at the city government's purchase of the Baguio Convention Center (BCC), a facility ordered built by former First Lady Imelda Marcos for the 1978 championship match between chess grandmasters Viktor Korchnoi and Anatoly Karpov.

Flooded, patched-up and virtually abandoned for close to two decades, the BCC may not be worth the P250 million the city has agreed to pay the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) in 2003, said Benedicto Alhambra, acting city administrator.

Marcos and Roman Cruz, former GSIS president, developed and financed the facility when the country won the hosting chores for the world chess match.

Former Mayor Bernardo Vergara told the INQUIRER in 2003 that it was precisely the BCC's celebrity status that convinced him to negotiate for its return to Baguio's management.

Winston Garcia, GSIS president, and Vergara, the Philippine Tourism Authority general manager during the Marcos regime, signed a memorandum of agreement that sold the BCC to Baguio through an underwriting agreement with the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA).

BCDA agreed to advance the city's payments against Baguio's share from the rental payments to Camp John Hay.

The transaction involved treasury bonds but Garcia also offered to loan Baguio P50 million to finance the restoration and renovation work on the BCC, Alhambra said.

"But from all indications, the transaction was accomplished without any effort to study the convention center's condition. No one asked for an appraisal. We do not know how GSIS justified selling this facility to Baguio," Alhambra said.

The city government had failed to recover the BCC's building plans, but independent surveys made by experts from the Cultural Center of the Philippines praised the center's design.

"They told me that the building was engineered in such a way that it could contain sound, so this was a very good convention hall. It could have hosted topnotch concerts and plays," Alhambra said.

The facility was also designed to offer technological glitz to the chess match. Its basement held four hydraulic lifts that were supposed to raise an invisible platform.

Korchnoi and Karpov were supposed to rise up to the BCC's main hall from the basement, Alhambra said. But the hydraulic lifts failed on the match day, and were dropped from the program.

The center eventually deteriorated, Alhambra said. The basement was submerged in water, apparently from an undiscovered underground lake.

He said the BCC's roof, made of aluminum tiles, had become outdated, and had not been replaced because the tile manufacturer had dropped this particular model.

"It will take P20 million to even start upgrading the convention center," he said.

A technical evaluation report of the convention center also confirmed that the BCC had faulty or substandard electrical wiring, had poor water piping facilities and used a misaligned sewage system.

The report, Alhambra said, stopped short of telling Mayor Braulio Yaranon that the building should be condemned. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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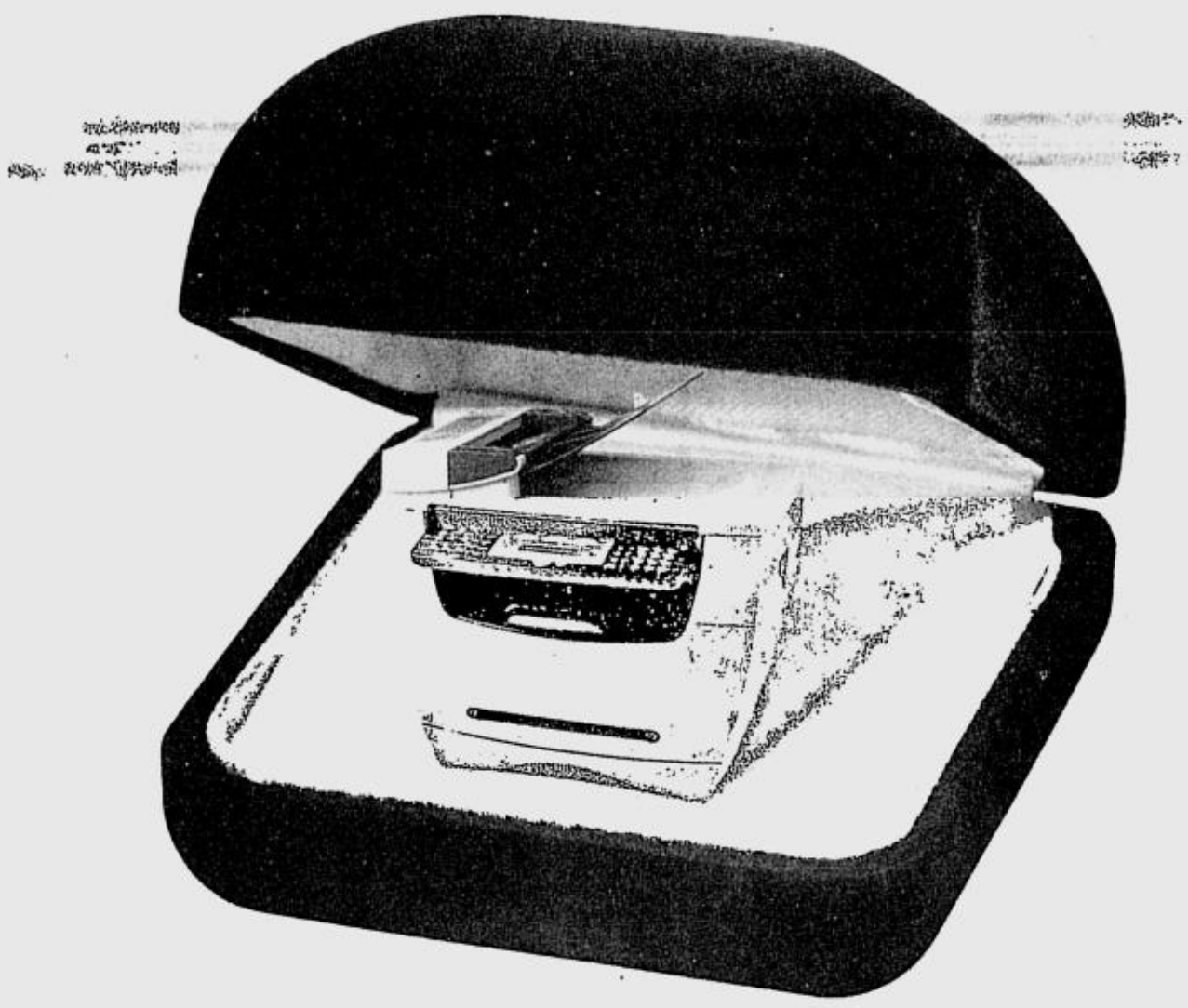

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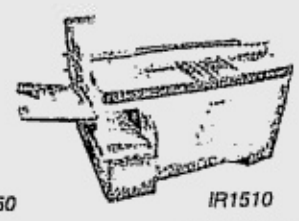
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INQUIRER Southern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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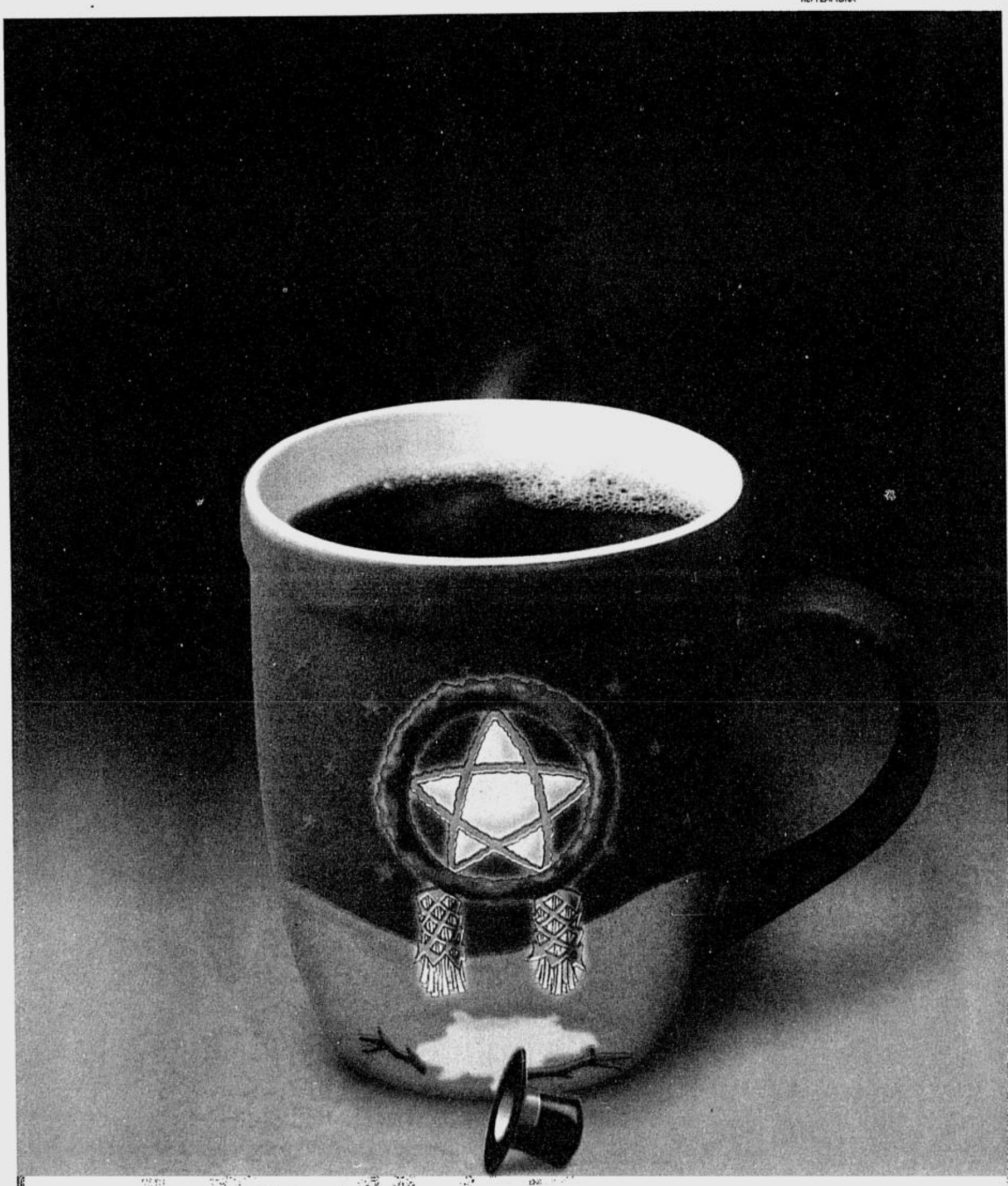
The many faces of calamity

REM ZAMORA

RESIDENTS of Sitio Tignoan in Real, Quezon look out a window as reports of survivors being found in a collapsed building in their town circulate. The town was one of the hardest hit by Typhoon "Winnie" which also uncovered the massive destruction of forests in the Sierra Madre ranges. Residents blamed logging for the disaster.



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Puro ka ba?

Losing a daughter

By Marlon Ramos
Real, Quezon

AS FAR as Malou Bautista could recall, the water current coming from the hill and the creek beside their house was unusually strong that night, when tragedy struck their small coastal village of Sitio Colangco in Barangay Tignoan, Real, Quezon.

The murky water and mud had found their way to houses in the community.

At about 7:30 p.m., Nov. 29, Tropical Depression "Winnie" was wrecking havoc on Real, Infanta and General Nakar towns in Quezon. The continuous heavy downpour had also caused rough seas and big waves in the Pacific Ocean in front of the neighborhood.

Moments later, Bautista, who was four months pregnant, said she heard her aunt telling them to immediately seek refuge at the one-story Repador building, which used to house a hardware store and a restaurant.

"Everybody knew that that building was the safest place where we could stay," she said. Or so they thought.

More than 100 people had already flocked to the place.

Bautista and her husband decided to go back to their house to get provisions as they expected to stay at the building for the next few days. She left her 5-year-old daughter, Genesis, to her mother. That was the last time she saw her alive.

Soon, the couple heard a deafening, thunderous roar that lasted about five minutes.

From outside their house, they saw thick mud blocking the road leading to the building. The wet earth "looked like a hill," said Bautista, leader of a local fisherfolk organization.

She said she saw her cousin Jeffrey running back to their house and yelling to them something they could not understand.

Suddenly, mud flowing down the hill swallowed Jeffrey. He was later rescued by residents who pulled him out of the mud. Bautista said they sought refuge for the night in the concrete house of a neighbor.

The morning after, she and the other survivors were stunned at what they saw: the building where most of the residents ran to collapsed from mud flows and moved a few meters away.

Mud also covered a 50-meter stretch of the national highway.

Looking for whatever was left in the area, Bautista found the lifeless body of her daughter trapped in the mud. The body bore several holes, she said.

Selfless rescue

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Lucena City

WHEN a medical team from the Camp Nakar Station Hospital based in Lucena City was sent to calamity-stricken areas in northern Quezon the morning after flash floods and landslides struck, it expected that their work would be no different from any other disaster mission in the past.

The members even planned a picnic on the beach after treating the last patient.

"We were all stunned. What we saw from the helicopter was a disaster of unprecedented magnitude. I told my staff to brace themselves for the enormous task ahead of us," said Lt. Col. Jocelyn Pancrudo-Turla, a medical doctor and leader of the team of 17 volunteers, including six women doctors, nurses and aides.

Theirs was the first medical team to reach the heavily devastated area.

Along with Maj. Gen. Pedro Cabuay, head of the Southern Luzon Unified Command, the team was immediately airlifted from Camp Nakar to the bank of the Agus River in Barangay Banugao, Infanta, on Tuesday morning.

Immediately, the team trekked toward General Nakar town, passing through roads littered with huge logs and carpeted with knee-deep mud in search of a place to be used as an emergency medical station.

They found the proposed town hall building, then under construction, in Barangay Anuling. The soldiers swiftly converted the place into an emergency hospital to accommodate the rush of patients, mostly injured by the floods and landslides. Piles of plywood became 10 makeshift beds.

For the next week, Turla's medical corps treated the victims of Tropical Depression "Winnie" and Typhoon "Violeta."

Sick and injured patients from nearby Infanta hiked for at least 10 km to reach the medical station.

Traders say Subic becoming a 'garrison'

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Several investors here assailed officials of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority for allegedly turning the freeport into a "restricted port and a garrison state" when they recently suspended the issuance of import permits here.

Some investors also stopped their business operations while others threatened to close shop as a result of the suspension.

An investor said several locators would urge SBMA officials to specify their policy direction. "This is already a restricted port, a garrison state and a militarized area," he said.

"They (SBMA officials) don't know what a freeport is. There should be free flow of movement of goods but they have already made restrictions everywhere," he added.

The suspension order, according to locators, has also caused the non-payment of workers' wages.

Locators involved in trade and manufacturing expressed dismay over what they called "unconstitutional" hold order. "We have repeatedly sought the approval of our import permit applications to bring new shipments from our suppliers abroad and keep our businesses, but the new SBMA management has yet to respond to our appeal," a locator told the INQUIRER.

In a statement sent to the INQUIRER, the locators said a recent dialogue between some of the affected locators and SBMA officials led by SBMA Administrator Alfredo Antonio "had not resulted in anything positive."

"All they could say was that they were under orders from Malacañang to issue the hold order, which was a blanket directive affecting all imported goods that would eventually end up in the local market," the statement said.

Antonio has yet to issue any explanation on the suspension of import permits.

"SBMA officials should know better. The regional trial court in Olongapo City had already declared as unconstitutional a Malacañang directive banning the importation of used motor vehicles into Subic," an investor said.

The new suspension order, according to the investor, is contrary to Republic Act 7227, which created the Subic Bay Freeport.

"(The contracts) specifically said that (locators) could import and export goods from the freeport," the investors said.

"The SBMA should rethink their stand on the hold order on import permits and gate passes as this would only put off any future investments," the statement said.

The investors said Lt. Gen. Jose Calimlim, senior deputy for administrator and chief of the intelligence and investigation office of the SBMA, recently ordered the cancellation of gate passes to all locators, including manufacturers.

The move has resulted in a row between Calimlim and Wistron Infocom, one of the largest locators in Subic.

Wistron officials declined to comment further on the issue when contacted by the INQUIRER.

Calimlim, speaking through Alex Allan, Freeport Services Corp. director, said he had nothing to do with the issue. *Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

GIANT 'SISIG' JONETTE OREJAS/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Workers do their tasks on an oversized pan containing the ingredients for what was touted to be the country's biggest *sisig*, or a dish made of pork cheeks and spices and is one of the dishes Pampanga became famous for.

Soldiers end search for bodies in collapsed building

CALAMBA CITY—Two days after miner-rescuers left the area, the head of the military unit in charge of the search and retrieval operations in the building that collapsed in Barangay Tignoan, Real, Quezon said they had already terminated the search for bodies believed to have been buried under the rubble since Monday.

Col. Jaime Buenaflor, head of the Philippine Army's 202nd Infantry Brigade, said they decided to stop digging and drilling in the site of the Repador Building after assessing that all possible sites where bodies could be found had been searched but to no avail.

Buenaflor said they likewise wanted to give the rescuers and soldiers a chance to rest.

As early as Saturday, he said they had already given up hope that survivors could still be rescued from the rubble.

Buenaflor said this was the reason the last batch of miners from Benguet left the site on Sunday afternoon.

He said that since they started their no let-up retrieval operations on Dec. 3, they had already recovered 79 bodies, including four persons who miraculously survived the 10-day ordeal under the debris.

Most of the bodies had already been buried in the municipal cemetery while others were temporarily buried at an open ground near the former site of the building, he said.

Buenaflor said most of the bodies had already been identified.

He said intermittent rains in the area had slowed down their operations in the past few days.

"We have already spoken with the local executives of Real, including the mayor and the barangay captain. We have likewise talked with relatives of the victims. They all agreed to the cessation of the operations," he told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview.

Buenaflor, however, said they would continue to dig at the site if the residents would request them to do so.

He said he had received reports that there were still 10 missing persons who have yet to be accounted for.

Since Saturday, the national road connecting Real and Infanta towns had already been cleared and was opened to light vehicles.

Buenaflor said the military engineering brigade and the Department of Public Works and Highways had constructed a detour at the Kinanliman Bridge which connects the two typhoon-ravaged towns. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Cops seize lumber in 2 trucks from Quezon

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Police seized lumber loaded in two trucks that were intercepted at a checkpoint here.

The trucks came from Quezon, police said.

Palawan has imposed a total ban on logging since the enactment of the Strategic Environmental Plan for Palawan in 1992 but authorities continue to report seizing illegally cut lumber.

Some of the policemen who seized the lumber said banned species of *ipil* trees were inserted between *falcata* and *malugay* wood.

Documents presented by the truck drivers showed a permit to transport only *falcata*.

The pieces of lumber were allegedly owned by a certain Welito Legarda.

Some inmates of the Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm were caught in the act of cutting old-growth acacia trees inside a civil reservation area in Barangay Iwahig.

Mayor Edward Hagedorn was enraged after learning that the cutting happened in an area reserved for people who do not have land.

Employees of the penal farm and inmates who have served their sentence are given preference to stay on the land.

BEN MOSES EBREO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

THE EFFECTS of ecological destruction were very evident in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya where even farm animals, like this goat, were not spared by nature's wrath.

"Heads will roll if we find out who were behind the cutting of these acacia trees," the mayor said amid allegations that the inmates acted upon the order of some top prison officials.

Presidential Decree 718 declared the 916-hectare land as a resettlement area. *Jofelle Tesorio, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Communist rebels launch new attacks on construction firms in 2 provinces

COMMUNIST rebels continued their attacks on construction firms, raiding one in Capiz and blowing up the firm's crane and another in Surigao del Sur, burning the firm's equipment.

In Capiz, some 30 men believed to be New People's Army (NPA) rebels entered the compound of the International Builders Corp. (IBC) in Barangay Codingle, around 2 km from Dumarao town.

They exploded a bomb to destroy the firm's crane.

There were no reported casualties, said Senior Supt. Norlito Bautista, Capiz police director. The crane was worth P500,000.

Another bomb placed under a 10-wheel dump truck, which was five meters from the crane, failed to explode and was diffused by policemen. The 4.5-kilo bomb was similar to the one recovered in San Remegio town in Antique in September after NPA rebels ambushed a team of policemen and soldiers.

Bautista said residents of the village and employees of the construction firm noticed the armed men only as they withdrew after the explosion. The residents and employees staying in a bunkhouse at first thought that firecrackers caused the explosion.

Bautista said the rebels were trying to collect taxes from the construction firm but the firm denied getting any demand for taxes.

In Surigao del Sur, rebels attacked the compound of the CBBI Construction in Bislig.

Maj. Gen. Samuel Bagasin, commander of the Army's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said the rebels torched several heavy equipment owned by CBBI which was building a project in Barangay Maharlika.

"The NPA in our area of operation resorts to arson if only to pressure the construction firms to give revolutionary taxes," Bagasin said.

Maria Malaya, NPA spokesperson for Northern Mindanao, said they were punishing Arturo Ongho, owner of CBBI, for his failure to fulfill his obligations to the "existing revolutionary government in the area."

Malaya said because it was only the businessman who owed them, the rebels did not harm the civilians guarding the equipment at the time of the attack.

Malaya said the rebels destroyed the heavy equipment by setting off land mines.

The rebel spokesperson said the attack should serve as warning to other contractors in the area to not forget their obligations to the "revolutionary government." *Nestor Burgos, PDI Visayas Bureau and Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Tacloban execs, workers to get extra bonuses

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—It will be a merry Christmas for the more than 1,000 employees of the city government here.

Mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez Sr. agreed to give the employees an additional bonus ranging from P4,000 to P15,000, on top of the regular bonuses that the city government employees received last month.

Regal Oliva, the mayor's executive secretary, said the extra bonus would be given to the employees on Dec. 21.

"This additional bonus for the employees of the city government would be a big help considering our tight economic situation," Oliva said.

Oliva said regular employees of the city government, including Mayor Romualdez and the other elected officials and department heads, would each receive P15,000. Casual employees would each get P8,000 while those categorized as emergency workers would each receive P4,000.

City budget officer Heraclea Segovia said the city government earmarked P16 million taken from its savings for this year for the additional bonus.

The giving of additional bonus to city workers was based on Memorandum Circular Number 2004-45 issued by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) dated Dec. 9 allowing LGUs to give additional bonuses if there are available funds.

Judge bans foreign travel for Ecleo as parricide trial starts

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—A Cebu Regional Trial Court judge yesterday issued a hold departure order against controversial cult leader Ruben Ecleo Jr.

Judge Geraldine Econg yesterday directed Ecleo to refrain from traveling abroad and restrict himself to Cebu or the court would revoke his bail bond and issue a warrant of arrest for him.

Econg issued the order despite the manifestation of Orlando Salantandre, Ecleo's defense counsel, that his client had already surrendered his passport to the court that granted his request to post a P1 million bail for provisional liberty.

Salantandre said his client would need to stay longer in Manila for his periodic heart tests.

Judge Econg yesterday found out that Ecleo's address at Forrest Hills, Banawa, Cebu City was indicated in the release order previously issued by RTC Judge Generosa Labra.

The discovery prompted Econg to order Ecleo to stay at his indicated address. She also ordered the defense to notify the court whenever Ecleo has to go to Manila for a medical check-up.

After two months of delay, the parricide case against the controversial cult leader was heard yesterday after it was raffled to Econg, the sixth judge who handled the case.

Ecleo, supreme master of the Philippine Benevolent Missionaries Association, stands accused of killing his wife, Alona Bacolod-Ecleo, 27, on Jan. 5, 2002.

Her decomposing body was found inside a garbage bag in a ravine along the roadside of Barangay Coro, Dalaguete, about 85 km south of this city. Autopsy report showed that Alona died of strangulation.

Ecleo yesterday told reporters that he welcomed that court's decision. He said he was also grateful to Econg for granting his request to spend the holiday season with his children who are all on Dinagat Island, the base of the PBMA, in Surigao del Norte.

Ecleo was accompanied at the start of the hearing by his mother, Surigao Del Norte Rep. Glenda Ecleo.

Econg denied Salantandre's motion to defer court proceedings pending the resolution of their request to transfer the venue of the trial to Manila.

The court did not rule on the matter since the Office of the Court Administrator has yet to elevate the request to the Supreme Court.

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Split work sked staggers on Day 1

By Margaux C. Ortiz

DESPITE "expected kinks" on its first day of implementation yesterday, the Staggered Working Time (SWT) scheme eased traffic in the metropolis, according to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

"We would say that there was less road congestion yesterday morning," MMDA General Manager Robert Nacianceno said in a phone interview.

He added that based on the reports of their traffic enforcers on Edsa, the tail end of vehicles on the southbound lane reached only as far as Kamuning flyover instead of Quezon Avenue.

But he stressed that they are giving the scheme a few more days before announcing an official assessment.

The MMDA official said many government offices failed to receive Memorandum Circular No. 81, signed by President Macapagal-Arroyo, on Tuesday.

The circular mandated the executive department and its bureaus and offices, including government owned and controlled corporations, to hold office from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. instead of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Lacking the effect of a law, the circular could only "strongly urge" officials and employees of the legislative and judicial branches and local government units to adopt the scheme.

At the same time, MC 81 could only "strongly encourage" the private sector to hold office from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

The schedule, which splits the office hours in public and private offices, is aimed at having workers occupy roads at different times.

The MMDA general manager said the Tripartite Industrial Peace Council, with representatives from groups like the Federation of Free Workers, Alliance of Progressive Labor and the Employees Confederation of Philippines, had assured the agency that they would disseminate the scheme to its members.

"The tripartite (council) representatives said that in their experience, their members readily follow any new resolution or policy which the group formulates," Nacianceno said.

As for LGUs, Nacianceno said almost all Metro Manila mayors agreed to implement the scheme when they were informed by the MMDA last week. He added that only Makati City was not able to reply when sought for their approval and comment on the SWT.

Makati Information and Community Relations Department chief Joselito Salgado said they would study the scheme's feasibility in the city.

Salgado explained that over 90 percent of Makati's employees live in the city and would not really affect traffic because they either walk or ride tricycles to work.

In Manila, the effect of the split working hours was hardly noticed but officials attributed these to several other factors.

Western Police District traffic Chief Supt. Cesar Javier blamed the usual heavy congestion along España to a badly done asphalt overlay near the railroad tracks in Sampaloc.

Javier said a bump formed on a newly asphalted portion of the road was slowing down traffic.

According to him, the bump used to be a pothole that he requested filled. But too much asphalt was poured over the pothole and a bump was created.

Javier added that the number of shoppers who had been flocking to Divisoria also contributed to the traffic congestion.

Divisoria, in Binondo and Tondo, is a popular destination in Manila for bargain hunters.

For her part, Manila Regional Trial Court Clerk of Court Jennifer dela Cruz-Buendia said force of habit was going against the staggered work scheme.

Some employees came late, while others continued working well into 5 p.m., the usual end of office hours.

"We are still adjusting right now," Buendia said.

The court, as directed by the Supreme Court, began implementing the staggered work schedule yesterday.

The Manila City government would begin implementing the scheme today, as the City Personnel Office had to spread the word first on the SWT among Manila's roughly 8,500 employees. *With reports from Leila B. Salaverria and Tarra V. Quismundo*

Slain lawman was a real life hero to family

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

A BROTHER of the policeman slain in a shootout with suspected robbers in Valenzuela City waited for the media briefing to be over.

And after most cameramen and photographers had left, he rushed to the 12 arrested suspects and threw punches.

"*Pu----ina ninyo. Mga walanghiya kayo,*" Cayetano Zabala, 40, yelled, tears of rage falling down his eyes.

Policemen at the Our Lady of Fatima Hospital conference room, where police officials held the briefing yesterday, were surprised.

They managed to pacify Zabala only after all the suspects were lying on the floor.

Zabala's younger brother, PO2 Victor Zabala, was killed after suspected robbers opened fire at their patrol car on Paso De Blas Road in Valenzuela City on Tuesday morning.

The encounter also left three suspects and two civilians dead.

First to respond

Victor was among the first policemen to go after the suspects, who had just robbed a Banco De Oro branch on Mac Arthur Highway.

The lawmen caught up with the suspects on board two white vans near the Malinta Exit. But the suspects, armed with rifles, beat them to the draw, killing Zabala on the spot.

Twelve suspects were arrested the other day. Yesterday, the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group reported the arrest of two more suspects.

They were arrested in follow-up operations in the group's alleged hideouts in Caloocan City and Malabon City.

Zabala used to work as desk officer at the office of the Valenzuela City police chief. He had just been transferred to the mobile patrol group.

Before his death, Zabala was planning to seek transfer to Bicol so he could be with his mother, Cayetano said.

Their father had just died three weeks ago. On Dec. 4, an uncle also died.

The family yesterday flew Zabala's remains to Bicol, police chief Billy Beltran said.

Zabala is the 13th child in their family of 14 children. He was 36 years old.

Helping nephew

"*Pangarap niya na pag-aralin 'yung panganay ko sa pagkapulis. Kaya lang, hanggang doon na lang siguro ang buhay niya,*" Cayetano said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo talked to Cayetano the other afternoon, hours after Zabala was killed.

The President also gave the family P100,000 in financial assistance.

Though still grieving, Cayetano said their only consolation was that the police managed to arrest his brother's alleged killers.

City police chief Billy Beltran and CIDG-NCR chief Federico Laciste Jr. were also given Medalya Ng Kagitingan awards.

Valenzuela City Mayor Sherwin Gatchalian also promised financial support to the victims. He will also give awards to the city police.

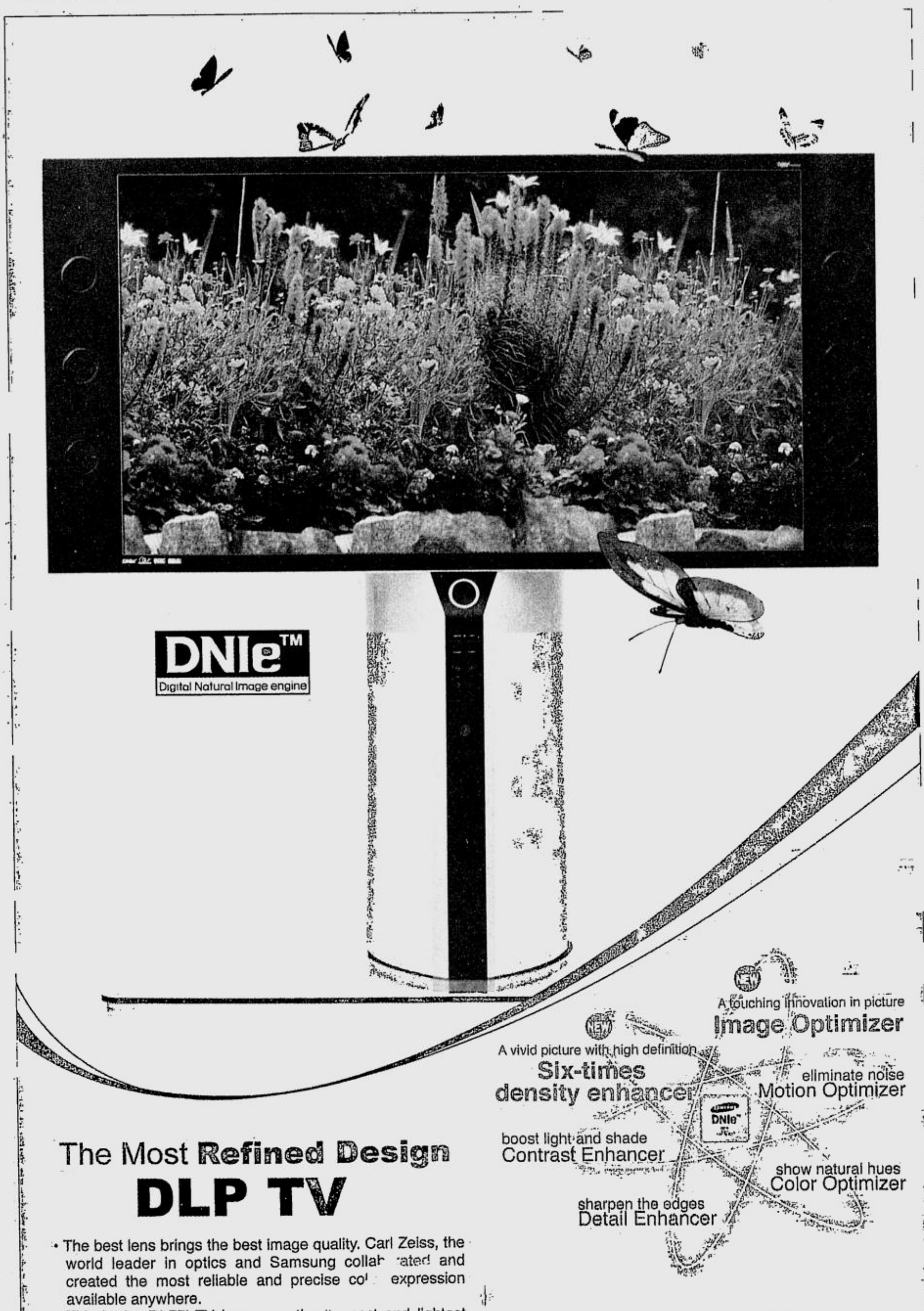
Director Avelino Razon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, said the suspects were part of a big syndicate responsible for at least 12 robberies in Metro Manila.

Cosmonaut health monitor

DOCTOR Sonny Viloria, who has had extensive training in natural medicine, is holding consultations on Automatic Reflective Diagnostic Kinetic (ARDK) every day until Saturday, Dec. 18.

Developed and designed by a group of Russian and Taiwanese scientists, the all-dimensional ARDK is a consolidation of 40 years of research studies. It is being used by cosmonauts to monitor their health while in space.

Dr. Viloria's consultations will be held at Room 205 of CRB building, Edsa, Cubao, Quezon City. Inquiries may be made by calling tel. nos. 448-7625 and 736-0844.



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Editor Ester G. Dipasupil ■ Assistant Editor Cenon B. Bibe

Manila hands out livelihood funding

By Tarra V. Quismundo

TEN DAYS before Christmas, hundreds of Manilans received a gift from the Manila City government, something out of which they would hopefully make more.

City Hall yesterday distributed capital loans to more than 400 housewives, self-employed and small business entrepreneurs of Manila, as part of Manila's continuous capital assistance program.

"I hope you use this to earn more, and double this again and again," said Mayor Lito Atienza, speaking to beneficiaries yesterday morning at City Hall's Antonio Villegas Hall.

Zero interest

Residents from the city's six districts received their loan grants ranging from P1,000 to P4,000, payable in ten weeks with no interest or collateral. Among the recipients were women who kept small food stalls and maintained businesses at home, for instance making tocino and repacking food stuff.

"Filipinos are known for their industry. That's why I believe that government should help the people earn more to move the economy," Atienza said, before distributing envelopes to his constituents.

The city's capital assistance program provides aid to at least 3,000 Manilans every year, with an annual allocation of P5 million. Yesterday, the city released P942,000 to the new batch of beneficiaries.

'Nobody wanted to help me'

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SHE LOST hope that she would get her only daughter back. And yesterday morning, a 39-year-old mother tried to kill herself by jumping from a vacant billboard on top of the Metro Rail Transit Quezon Avenue Station in Quezon City.

She stayed on top, crying as she held onto a doll.

But after four hours of sending policemen, rescuers and bystanders to panic, Precy Libatique Delos Santos, 39, voluntarily stepped down the billboard after police officials assured her they would help her find her 9-year-old daughter.

In the afternoon, she got the only thing she wanted: she was reunited with her daughter.

Delos Santos went up the billboard at about 4 a.m. yesterday, PO1 Rustico Reyes Jr. told the INQUIRER. Policemen, rescue teams and members of the media quickly responded to the area.

Threat to jump

But she refused to get down, threatening to jump.

She yelled at cameramen and photographers, telling them to go away.

The woman was despondent that her former lover took their daughter from her on Saturday.

Kamuning Police Station chief Edgardo Pamittan tried convincing her to get down. She refused several times. But after Pamittan promised to help her find her daughter, Delos Santos climbed down.

City social welfare and development volunteer Lilia Montenegro told the INQUIRER Delos Santos was "emotionally depressed." The mother was tired of looking for her child and had not eaten for four days.

Delos Santos, who lives in Quezon Province, told the INQUIRER later she and her daughter arrived in Metro Manila on Saturday because the child's father, a Sudanese, wanted to see the girl.

They met in a mall in Muntinlupa. But the father never gave her daughter back.

Met with laughter

"Sinuyod ko ang Pampanga. Lumapit ako sa mga pulis. Pinagtawanan lang nila ako (I searched Pampanga. I sought help from the police. They only laughed at me)," she said in between sobs.

She said she went to police headquarters in Camp Crame and the National Bureau of Investigation but because she could not give the exact address of her former lover, they did not help her.

"Lumapit din ako sa GMA 7 at ABS-CBN 2. Hindi ako pinansin (I sought the help of GMA 7 and ABS-CBN 2 but they ignored me," Delos Santos added.

In the afternoon, Montenegro and the police were able to track down the woman's partner.

DESPONDENT, Precy Delos Santos wards off police and rescuers with a knife. She earlier sought help from the police and media but she claimed she was ignored. PAT ROQUE

The father told Montenegro he took away their daughter because Delos Santos' husband had sexually abused the child thrice.

The father, who lives in Pampanga, promised to bring their daughter to the police station.

"Inaamin ko may hindi magandang nangyari sa anak ko. Pero hindi ko iyon kagustuhan. Kaya nga pinakulong ko kaagad ang asawa ko (I admit that something bad happened to my daughter but I did not like it either. That was why I immediately had my husband sent to jail," Delos Santos said.

The mother said she did everything to give her daughter a good life. Although they were poor, she said she did everything to always buy her daughter new pairs of shoes, clothes and watches.

She said she had been saving for her daughter's 10th birthday in January 2005.

"Bumibili na ako kahit paisa-isang kilong spaghetti (I have started buying spaghetti)," she also said.

Networks comment

Sought for comment about the claims of Delos Santos that she was turned her away when she sought their help, broadcast networks GMA 7 and ABS-CBN said they were looking into the woman's statements.

"We are still checking the veracity of the alleged victim's claim," said a statement issued by the ABS-CBN Corporate Public Relations Department.

For his part, Jayce Perlas, GMA Network program publicity head, said, "As of the moment, we are confirming if indeed Percy approached us."

Perlas added, "We extend help whenever we can. The network has various public service arms which provide different levels of assistance subject to resources at hand."

Off-duty lawman kills rob suspect

By Leila B. Salaverria

QUEZON City policeman PO2 Anthony Pamilar was off duty and out of his area of responsibility when he heard a businesswoman shout for help after she was robbed in Manila early yesterday morning.

The situation did not prevent Pamilar from coming to the aid of Leonila Canejo. He went out of his house and shouted at the three suspects to stop, telling them that he is a policeman.

However, one of the suspects opened fire at him before the group ran off.

Pamilar followed, trading shots with the suspects before hitting and killing one of them. The two others escaped.

The slain suspect, who had four gunshot wounds, remained unidentified at press time.

Police said the fatality was around 30 to 40 years old, 5'7 to 5'8 tall and had short hair.

NBI gives tips to prospective OFWs

By Leila B. Salaverria

WITH thousands of Filipinos raring to work abroad to provide better lives to their families, illegal recruitment is an ever present threat.

But those dreaming to seek greener pastures abroad need not become sitting ducks to unscrupulous and dishonest recruiters who take their money and promise them jobs abroad that, however, fail to materialize.

The National Bureau of Investigation's Anti-Human Trafficking Division, one of the busiest offices at the bureau, has provided tips on how people could avoid being duped of their money and having their dreams of working overseas dashed.

A key point is that prospective overseas workers must check if the agency they would be dealing with has been licensed by the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency.

Applicants must refrain from dealing with licensed agencies that have no job orders.

Dalena seeks blood donors

PAINTER Danilo Dalena will undergo spinal cord surgery today and needs type A+ blood.

Those who can donate may contact Kiri Dalena at 0921-3788812 or go direct to Room 333 of St. Luke's Hospital. If not, just please spread the word.

FPJ would have chosen death

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

RABID fans of the late actor Fernando Poe Jr. went overboard when they burned the funeral wreath sent by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

You can't blame the fans because they are illiterate, and uneducated people most often become irrational when they are emotional.

But where were FPJ's grieving relatives when the fans became a mob and burned the wreath?

It seems the actor's relatives are under the control of his fans. Otherwise, the perception is that what the fans did have the tacit approval of FPJ's relatives.

***

Some opposition politicians are probably behind the rabble-rousing at the Sto. Domingo Church that resulted in the wreath-burning.

These politicians are now exploiting the situation to suit their ends.

They are like vultures capitalizing on a dead man to bloat their ego.

***

FPJ died in the morning of Monday, Dec. 13, but St. Luke's Hospital announced his death in the first hour of Tuesday.

The hospital management probably did not make the announcement immediately for fear trouble might erupt at the hospital from FPJ fans. The hospital waited for early Tuesday morning after the crowd holding vigil had thinned down.

Or FPJ's relatives asked the hospital not to break the news on the 13th. FPJ's bosom buddy, former President Erap, hates the number 13.

***

FPJ would have chosen death rather than have people look at him with pity after he recovered.

The macho actor would have been a vegetable, a complete paralytic, had he survived the massive stroke.

***

Poe died at the peak of his popularity in the cinematic world. He was still good-looking, despite his age, and his fans adored him.

People who die at the peak of their career or popularity are remembered by their admirers on the day of their death. Their image—vibrant, full of life—is etched forever in the memory of their admirers.

Look at US President John F. Kennedy, who was assassinated while in office. Look at Marilyn Monroe and James Dean, who died while they were at the peak of their movie careers. Look at our very own Ninoy Aquino, who was assassinated at the Manila International Airport upon his return from the US.

Those personalities are remembered as they were upon their death.

Now, take a look at former President Ronald Reagan, who died of old age of Alzheimer's Disease. Americans don't recall him now as the man who led them in the 1980s, but as an old man who didn't recognize his wife Nancy in the last years of his life.

Another example is former world boxing champion Muhammad Ali. Ali has Parkinson's Disease. Ali, who practically flew in the ring during his famous bouts, can't control his movements. People look at him with pity.

Fernando Poe Jr. probably would have wanted his fans to remember him as macho, strong, relatively young and good-looking. He wouldn't have wanted to fade away into oblivion. On that score, FPJ was a lucky guy.

***

Platitudes to express condolences with FPJ's relatives have been coming out of politicians' mouths.

But the one by Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson beats them all.

Interviewed on ABS-CBN's TV Patrol newscast Tuesday, the controversial senator said: "*Bakit siya pa ang namatay? Marami naman ang masasamang-loob diyan* (Why did he it have to be FPJ when there are many bad people around)?"

Oo nga naman, Ping, bakit si FPJ pa at hindi iba?

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SR 1.8 GAS A/T	896,000	100,000	67,342	46,416	36,782	26,500	21,622	18,335	17,196
GSX 2.0 GAS A/T	847,000	100,000	62,921	43,370	34,371	24,763	20,205	17,131	16,067
GLX 1.8 GAS A/T	807,000	90,000	60,215	41,505	32,895	23,699	19,337	16,395	15,376
GL 1.8 GAS M/T	698,000	80,000	51,500	35,349	28,023	20,189	16,473	13,963	13,096
DLX 2.4 DSL M/T	690,000	80,000	53,242	36,698	29,063	20,938	17,084	14,496	13,596
DLX 1.8 GAS M/T (12.07%)	663,000	80,000	48,583	33,173	26,301	18,948	15,460	13,103	12,290
DLX 1.8 GAS M/T (50%)	663,000	331,500	27,625	18,417	13,856	9,890	8,037	6,776	6,336

RAV4 FINANCING SCHEMES

VARIANT	SRP	LOW DP	12	18	24	36	48	60	72
4X4 A/T	1,268,000	100,000	104,473	72,011	57,281	41,065	33,506	28,444	26,678
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Buhain: From PSC to GAB

By Marc Anthony Reyes

FROM amateur sports czar to head of the country's pro sports body.

The switch in position was confirmed yesterday by Eric Buhain, who will soon take over as Games and Amusements Board chair after his courtesy resignation as Philippine Sports Commission head was accepted by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The rumors are true. My (new) appointment was transmitted to me by Malacañang Tuesday. It was signed by the President Nov. 26," Buhain said.

Buhain's transfer from the PSC to the GAB was rumored since last month after Ateneo athletic director Junjun Capistrano, a former top official of the SEAG organizing committee that ran the 1991 games in Manila, announced he was available for the top PSC post.

There's a world of difference between both positions.

The PSC chair heads a body that promotes and develop amateur sports, including the funding and training of the country's top athletes for international competitions. It has a fixed budget from the General Appropriations Act and enjoys additional funding from Pagcor and Malacañang for special projects like stints in the Olympics, Asian Games and the SEAG.

The GAB deals mainly with supervising pro sports and takes care of issuing licenses to pro cagers, boxers, cyclists, golfers and other professional athletes.

Buhain, who at 31 became the youngest PSC chair when he was appointed in January 2001, said he would stay on at the PSC until his replacement is named by Malacañang. Buhain said he has informed GAB chair Eduardo Villanueva about this.

"It is indeed a humbling experience serving for our national athletes and coaches from which I once belong," said Buhain. "And I would like to sincerely thank the President for letting me serve Philippine sports some years after I have been a national athlete and coach.

"I've been at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex since I was 7 years old and I consider it as my second home. I

BUHAIN/ A26

WHAT'S INSIDE

Sonics rout Lakers; Webber lifts Kings/A26

Juico heads roster of possible replacements

WHO'S next in line?

That question was on everybody's lips at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex yesterday following the departure of Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain to take over as head of the Games and Amusements Board.

Buhain, who announced his change of jobs yesterday, didn't make any recommendation for his replacement at the PSC although he confirmed that the same people floated in the media as his probable successors are on the Palace list.

Sources at the RMSC said that former PSC chair Philip Juico, who served during the term of President Ramos, is the strongest bet considering that he stayed longest among previous PSC chiefs.

However, history is against Juico's chances because there has never been a "*balik*-PSC" chair since its creation in 1990.

Also in the list is outgoing POC president Celso Dayrit, who could be given the PSC post "in exchange" for his withdrawal in the last POC elections.

Other names that cropped up were former commissioner Cynthia Carrion, Ateneo athletic director Junjun Capistrano, Manila Sports Council chair Ali Atienza, Mikee Cojuangco and PSC commissioner Butch Ramirez. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

RP XI scores 1st win

KUALA LUMPUR—Fresh off its historic victory in the Tiger Cup, the Philippines attempts a giant-size upset when it takes on defending champion Thailand in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia at 6 p.m. today. The game will be shown live overStar Sports.

The RP men's squad ended their 16-game, 8-year winless streak with a 2-1 come-from-behind triumph in injury time over Timor Leste in Group B Tuesday evening.

Substitute Emilio Caligdong proved to be the hero as he knocked in the equalizer in the 89th minute and then scored the game-winner two minutes into injury time.

It was rhe Philippines' first win in the biennial football competition for Southeast Asian nations since it started in 1996. The Filipinos, sponsored here by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, began their 2004 campaign with a 1-0 defeat to Myanmar followed by a 4-1 setback to Malaysia.

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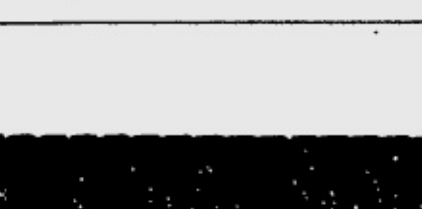

Ralf Schumacher, racing driver of BMW WilliamsF1 Team: «Time is always the decisive factor – for me and for Oris».

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Shell gets back at Talk 'N Text

GAME TODAY (*Dagupan*)
6 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs San Miguel

By Musong R. Castillo

RONALD Tubid scored 22 of his career-high 28 in the first half and turbo-charged the Shell offense last night in a 103-98 win over Talk 'N Text that kept its outright semis bid alive in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup.

The Turbochargers fed off Tubid's energy to lead from start to finish and win for the 11th time in 17 games while denying the Phone Pals an outright berth.

Talk 'N Text trailed by as many as 17 points at one point in the fourth period and dropped into a tie for the lead with idle Barangay Ginebra at 11-5.

More significantly, the Phone Pals now have only two chances left to advance to the semifinals automatically, against Sta. Lucia and the rock-solid Kings.

"We knew how important this game was for us, that's why the boys played all out," said Shell coach Leo Austria in Filipino. "Had Talk 'N Text won, it would've been assured of a semis slot and our chances would have dimmed."

The Shell win also took sister teams Purefoods (8-8) and San Miguel (7-8) out of the outright semifinal equation.

The Beermen, incidentally, clash with Coca-Cola in another road game scheduled at 6 p.m. at the Dagupan Astrodome in Dagupan City, Pangasinan.

Not only did Shell get back at the team that dealt it a 63-80 mangling last Nov. 3. It also denied the Phone Pals the opportunity to complete another great comeback.

The Phone Pals had led this tournament from the start by winning all sorts of games, including one where they trailed by as many as 21 points before defeating Purefoods earlier in the round.

Shell can gain a playoff for one of the two slots if it beats FedEx Express in its last game in the classification round Sunday.

Tubid was on the floor for 33 minutes after being called out of the bench earlier than usual when Christian Calaguio ran into foul trouble.

FedEx Express, drawing double digit figures from six players, dealt Sta. Lucia Realty a 114-104 lashing in the second game. The Express, led by RenRen Ritualo's 24 points, improved their record to 6-9 while the Realtors fell to 5-10.

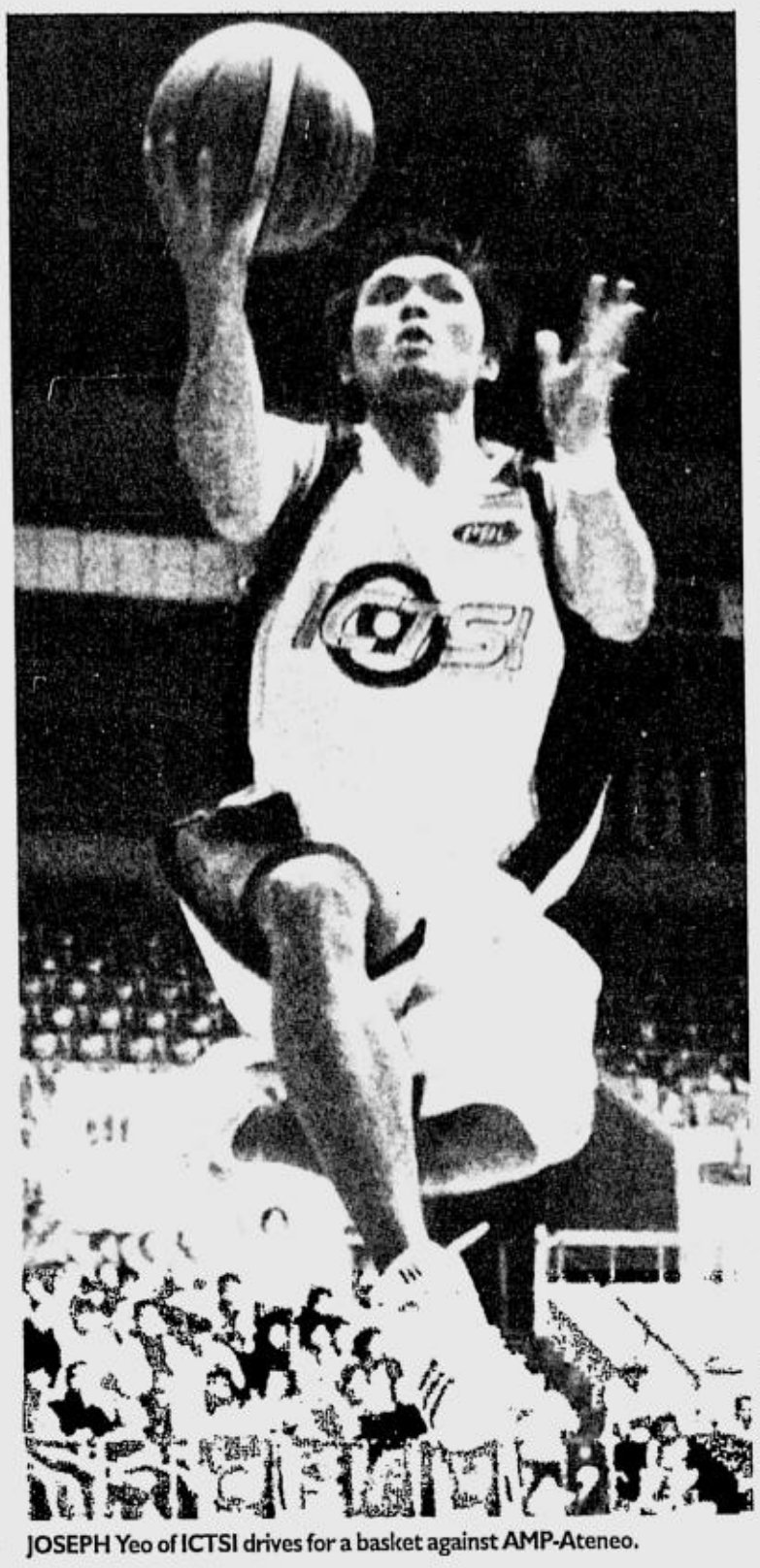
The Scores:

First Game

SHELL 103—Tubid 28, Dela Cruz 17, Mamaril 16, Alvarez 9, Ferreira 8, Legaspi 8, Bajar 7, Calaguio 6, Sta. Maria 4, Cruz 0, Jackson 0.

TALK 'N TEXT 98—Pablo 18, Miller 16, Belano 16, Telan 12, De Ocampo 11, Alapag 8, Ravena 6, Gelig 5, Camaso 4, Salangsang 2, Fran 0.

Quarters: 30-20, 60-52, 83-68, 103-98.



JOSEPH Yeo of ICTSI drives for a basket against AMP-Ateneo.

BETOY JOHNSON

Deen stays ahead by 2

CEBU—Another double-bogey struck Eric Deen late in his round but he had enough cushion to stay on top by two strokes over Mark Anthony Dy halfway through the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour at the Cebu Country Club here.

Deen had a two-over par 74 for the second straight day, no thanks to a double-bogey on the 17th but stayed on course for his three-peat bid with a 148 total after 36 holes.

As Carl Almario hobbled home with a 78, Dy took over the main challenger's role by firing the day's best round of even-par 72, spiked by four birdies including the tough 18th hole.

Dy's last hole birdie actually made a three-shot swing happen on the last two holes and with his big improvement form a 78 on Tuesday, he seems ready for a showdown with Deen.

Ferdinand Mondares also kept himself in the hunt with a 75 and a 151 aggregate while Almario, only two shots back after Round 1, fell five behind at 153 following a 78. Tristan Tabanas (77-153), and Lino Retuerto (83-161) occupy the last two positions.

National player Jayvie Agojo plunges into action today in 36-hole ladies Class A division of the Samsung Tour also sponsored by Tokyo Tokyo, C-Lium Fiber, Gatorade, Philippine Airlines, adidas Taylormade, KZG by Custom Clubmakers, Pink Patio Boracay, Coppertone Sport and Rogin-E. Killer Bee, Jam 88.3, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, 99.5 RT and 103.5 K-Lite are media partners.

Agojo is playing against World Amateur teammate Anya Tanpinco of Bacolod in the chase for a slot to the grand finals on Feb. 8-11 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club.

Wizards eye 7th win

GAMES TODAY (*Letran Gym*)
2 p.m.—AMP-Ateneo vs Magnolia-FEU
4 p.m.—Air Phil. vs Toyota Otis-Letran

THERE'S no question that smart defense has fueled the rise of Magnolia-FEU in the PBL Open Championship.

After an uncharacteristic three-game losing skid, the reigning champions racked up six wins in a row by limiting opponents to a league-best record of 59.8 points per game.

And the Ice Cream Wizards will try to stretch this run to seven when they gun for leadership against the slumping AMP-Ateneo at 2 p.m. today at the Letran College Gym.

The Wizards have reason to be cautious against the unpredictable Eagles. The seventh-placed AMP-Ateneo scored one of its three wins against Mangolia-FEU, 55-53, in the first round.

It will be a clash of skidding teams when Toyota Otis-Letran and Air Philippines tangle in the second game at 4 p.m.

Along with AMP-Ateneo, another loss for the Knights and the Flight could compromise their quarterfinal bids.

The Knights, who finished third in their maiden campaign last conference, have been slipping in the standings. They're now coming off back-to-back losses against Montaña and Welcoat.

But the Flight are in worse state, having remained winless in their last eight outings.

Toyota Otis-Letran nipped Air Philippines, 74-71, in their first meeting.

Expected to take charge for Magnolia-FEU are big men Arwind Santos, Cesar Catli and Mark Isip. AMP-Ateneo will strive to even things out behind the shooting of Emerson Oreta, LA Tenorio and Jenkins Mesina. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Lady Admirals post sweep

THE PHILIPPINE Maritime Institute Lady Admirals pulverized San Beda-Alabang, 60-45, yesterday to post a seven-game sweep of the 12th National Capital Region Athletic Association women's basketball tournament elimination round at the Pasay Sports Complex.

The Lady Admirals held the Lionesses to just four points in the first half en route to the victory that earned them the top semifinals berth. They will face the loser of the Rizal Technological University-Polytechnic University of the Philippines tussle in the second round at 9 a.m. today.

Janice de Guzman showed the way for the Lady Admirals with 16 Points while Jacqueline Suarez hit 14.

A day earlier, De Guzman delivered 26 points in the Lady Admirals' 75-56 conquest of PUP. The setback put PUP in a share of third spot at 4-2 with RTU.

Cangolf, Riviera host jungolf tilt

THE ANNUAL Christmas tournament of the Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines sponsored by Nike will be held on Monday at the Canlubang Golf and Country Club in Laguna and the Riviera Golf and Country Club in Silang, Cavite.

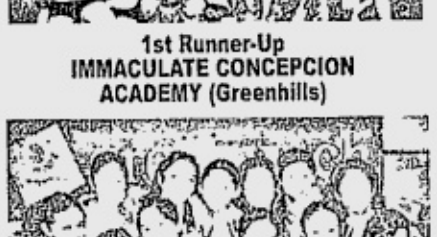
Jungolfers in Class A (15-17 years), Class B (13-14), Class C (11-12) and Class D (9-10) will play at Canlubang while those in Class E (7-8) and Class F (6 and under) will see action at the Riviera executive course.

Interested players are advised to register on or before Dec. 17. Coinciding with the tourney is the renewal of membership and the election of officers. Call 893-9599 for details.

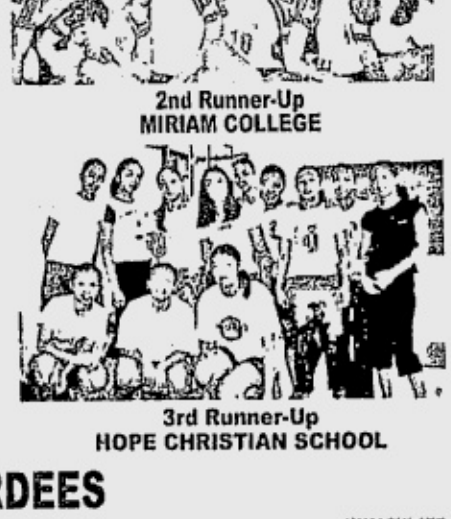
Nike, through its local distributor Pac-Sports Philippines, is providing giveaways and raffle items to all participants.

CONGRATULATIONS !!

1st Runner-Up
IMMACULATE CONCEPCION ACADEMY (Greenhills)



2nd Runner-Up
MIRIAM COLLEGE



3rd Runner-Up
HOPE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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SPORTSWATCH

Paragua leads Singapore Masters

FILIPINO GM-candidate Mark Paragua beat IM Jason Goh of Singapore in the sixth round to grab the solo lead in the 2004 Singapore Masters International Open Chess Championships Tuesday night at the Tao Nan School, Marine Crescent district. Paragua posted his fifth win against a loss and climbed to 5.0 points, towing GM Wu Wenjin of China and GM Susanto Meganto of Indonesia, with 4.5 points each. Paragua will face GM Yu Shaoteng of China while Wu and Megaranto collide in the seventh round. In the Asian age-group brackets, Jedara Docena of Bohol beat Santhana Mahalingam Aswhini of India to score 5.0 points in the girls' 12 and under. In the boys' 14 and under, Leo Daylo Jr. drew with Alexandr Kasyan to improve to 4.0 points. Other Filipino age-groupers are Marco Polo Rosete (3.5/B U-14); Jesus Alfonso Datu (3.0/B U-14);Randolph Dalauta (2.5/ B U-14); Miggo Vittorio Mejico (1.0/ B U-14); Robert Franz Grafil (3.5/B U-12); Ma. Virginia Gonzales (2.0/G U-14); Mary Meolla Villanueva (2.0/ G U-14); and Kristine Mae Mariano (3.0/G U-12). *NM Marlon Bernardino*

National drag race at Clark today

THE FIFTH leg of the Petron Blaze Shoot-out National Drag Race Championship Series will be held today at the spur road inside Clark Special Economic Zone in Pampanga. Teams from Manila, Dagupan, Bulacan, Cabanatuan, Baguio, Pangasinan and Pampanga will battle it out for cash prizes and trophies. Current series leaders Joey Galang (MOH Speed) with 120 points, Dondi Montecilo with 100 points and Nelson Pamintuan with 70 points are expected to join the race. The Petron Blaze Shoot-out National Drag Race Championship Series is organized by Activity Asia Association and sponsored by Petron Blaze and Ultron.

Santiago posts record 9 straight wins

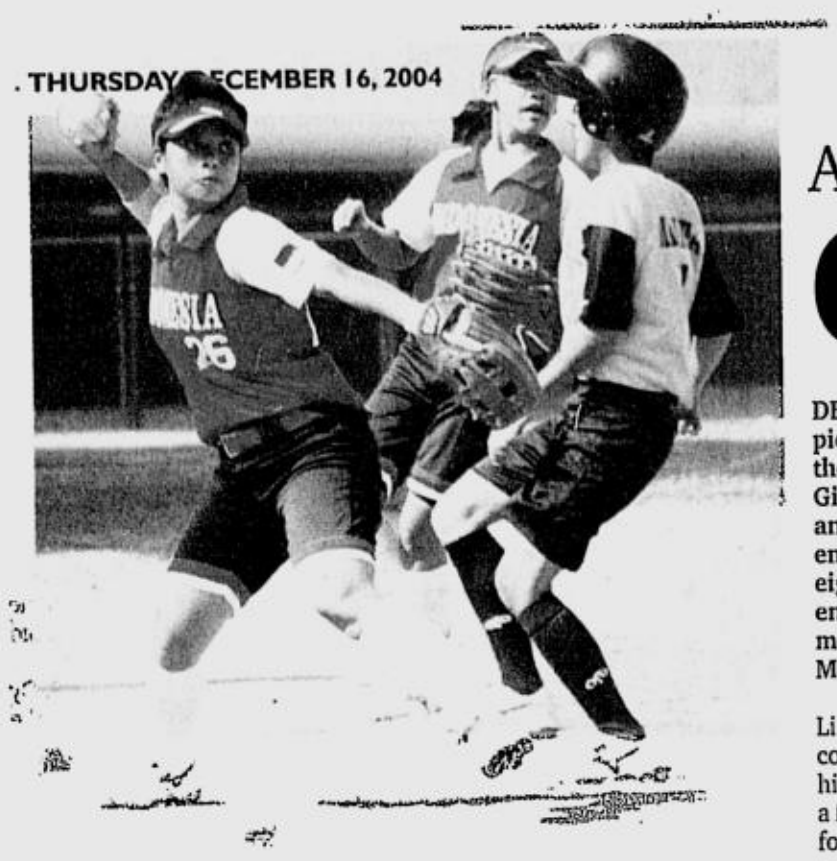
COCKER-SPORTSMAN Jun Santiago's dark red Roundheads wiped out the opponents by piling a record nine consecutive victories in as many fights during the opening round of the NCA 7-Cock Derby Tuesday night at the Araneta Coliseum. The championship round (4-cock) starts at 6 p.m. with more than 50 encounters lined up. Santiago's winning rampage started when two of his bets, Firefly Thunderbird 13 and Beladio GC, posted six wins early on. His other entry, Firefly 14 (in partnership with Patrick Antonio) completed the rout by adding three more wins. Joining Santiago in the winner's circle are Gov. Ito Ynares (Binangonan Balbina), two-time world champion William Go (Golf Cup Colorado Sundance Mapalad) and the Jimafer Group (Jimafer JVL PBRJ I) with three wins each. Meanwhile, the second leg of the NCA 7-Cock Derby series will resume on Jan. 11.

Provincial cockers challenge NCR bets

A BIG group of cockers and gamefowl breeders from Batangas and Laguna will challenge Metro Manila bets in a 3-cock derby tonight at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum to be sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Arnold Perez of Batangas will host the P300,000 derby sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Entry fee is P5,500. Entries will be accepted until 2 p.m. today and participants may call 874-3910 and 873-1040 for details. Two entries—King LA of Dandan Antipolo and Jhezil Farm Feb. 12 of Jover Dilao—topped the 3-cock derby last week. Meanwhile, coliseum manager Alex Tobias announced the staging of two more 3-cock derbies on Dec. 23 (Rudy Sayaman) and Dec. 30 (Eddie Alejandro. Both derbies stake a cash prize of P300,000.

Smalltime fastest win ulutan today

A HUNDRED exciting matches await hackfight enthusiasts starting at 7 a.m. today when Bebot "Balot" Reyes hosts a 1-Cock X'mas Smalltime Fastest Win Ulutan at Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque. Entry fee is P500 and minimum bet is P2,200. The entry that will post the fastest win gets P10,000; the 2nd—P8,000; 3rd—P6,000; 4th—P4,000, while the 5th up to 7th fast-clockers pocket P2,000 each. Meanwhile, it's all systems go for the December 18, Cash Premyo VIII 3-Cock Derby. Submission of weights is set on the day of the fight from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. For details, call tels. 833-2275/833-1638 or cell 0920-3074225/09222-4243404. Look for Shirley, Aubrey, Tiling or Willy.



ANITA Sari Liu of Indonesia forces out Wong Yen Ling of Malaysia in the third base during yesterday's game. JESS YUSON

ASIAN SOFTBALL

Chinese oust Filipinas

DEFENDING champion China ousted the Philippine Blu Girls, 5-0, last night and kept its unbeaten record in the eighth Asian women's softball tournament at the Rizal Memorial stadium.

Olympic veterans Li Qi and Chen Yan combined for a no-hitter while drawing a five-hit support as the Chinese raced to their fourth straight win to gain the semifinals, something which everybody had expected.

GAMES TODAY
(Rizal ballpark)
8 a.m.—Korea vs India
10 a.m.—RP vs Malaysia
12 noon—Japan vs Singapore
2 p.m.—China vs Thailand
4 p.m.—Chinese-Taipei vs Hong Kong
6 p.m.—DPR Korea vs Indonesia

Like China, Athens Olympics bronze medalist Japan went 4-0 as it downed South Korea, 2-0, in a Group A match for a place in the semifinals which begins tomorrow.

So dominant were the two Chinese hurlers that they allowed only one Blu Girl—Esmeralda Tayag—to reach first base, no thanks to a fielding error by shortstop Tan Ying with two outs in the third inning.

The Chinese sent Blu Girl starter Zayrel Ramos to the showers as early as the first inning with a four-run blast on three hits that included back-to-back doubles by Li Ping and Ling Hua.

Heidilyn Arca took the mound in favor of Ramos after that fateful scoring splurge, but she, too, was not up to the challenge.

The Blu Girls got eliminated after taking their second straight loss in four games.

Chinese-Taipei blanked Singapore, 11-0 yesterday, to virtually make the semifinals.

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Promo Period: Sept. 27- Dec. 14, 2004
Deadline of Entries:
Monthly Draws: October 17 and Nov. 17, 2004
Grand Draw: Dec. 14, 2004
Draw Dates:
Monthly Draw: October 22 and Nov. 22, 2004
Grand Draw: Dec. 21, 2004

See posters and print ads for details.
Per DTI Permit No. 2147, series of 2004

Drop in drop boxes located at Ayala and Robinson's cinema lobbies, and all LBC and Netopia branches. You may also mail entries to: Guyito Wild Hunt, PDI Bldg., corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Chino Roces Ave., Makati City.

UST spikers try to firm up Shakey's V-League drive

UNIVERSITY of Santo Tomas and Philippine Sports Commission try to keep their 1-2 positions and drive a wedge between them and their pursuers when they battle separate rivals today in the Shakey's V-League second conference at the Rizal Coliseum.

Unbeaten in three starts, including a thrilling five-setter win over PSC last week, the UST belles are heavily favored to notch their fourth straight victory against Far Eastern U, a team hard-pressed to come up with big games after dropping three of its first four games. Gametime is at 5 p.m.

While the UST Tigresses have a relatively lighter assignment in the Lady Tams, the same could not be said of the fancied PSC squad, which is expected to have its hands full against two-time UAAP champion La Salle.

PSC bashed Letran, 25-23, 25-16, 25-18, Tuesday night to post its fourth win in five outings for solo second while La Salle smashed FEU, 25-22, 25-23, 25-15, Sunday, its second in three games for a hold of third place in the tournament organized by Sports Vision Management Group Inc.

The PSC-La Salle match at 3 p.m. will be telecast on IBC-13 with the UST-FEU game to be aired tomorrow starting at 3 p.m.

Batawang Boxer of the Month

REIGNING Pan-African junior flyweight king Bert Batawang of the SGG Stable has been chosen by the Games and Amusements Board as its Boxer of the Month for November.

Batawang was credited for knocking out world-ranked South African Sithembele Kibiti in their Nov. 20 showdown held at the Oliver Tambo Hall in Khaliyetsha.

Kibiti, who was widely favored to frustrate Batawang before the bout, was ranked WBA No. 5, WBC No. 6 and WBO No. 8 and unbeaten in 16 fights before stepping into the ring against the Cebuano Batawang.

Salven Lagumbay, coritributor

Dalena part of FPJ's last hours on Earth

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

THERE is a touch of drama attending today's spinal cord surgery on painter Danny Dalena at St. Luke's. Not much, though, on the issue of Dalena badly in need of an A+ blood as St. Luke's ran out of that yesterday, even as that deserves a second look for the queerness of things at the renowned hospital.

Poet/essayist/scriptwriter Pete Lacaba had said he would make sure Dalena would have plenty of A+ blood today and, knowing how efficient Pete had always been in "texting" friends every time a big event would come along, I can believe that.

The surgery on Dalena today is as big an event as the PBA game tonight in Dagupan City, with no less than City Vice Mayor Fernandez as the spearhead of the expected blockbuster encounter between San Miguel Beer and Coke at the Astrodome. Willy Marcial will make sure no hitch will mar the occasion.

Pete Lacaba's text yesterday to friends reads: "We need TYPE A+ BLOOD DONORS for painter DANILO DALENA who will undergo spinal cord surgery tomorrow. Ngayn lang snbi ng hospital that they ran out of A+ Blood. Pls cntact kiri dalena at 09213788812 or go direct to rm333 st lukes hosp."

A joke had quickly flown: A Dalena friend had a Type A blood—"A as in alcohol." He drinks almost every day that's why.

That type was not acceptable, though. The + after A is needed to make it compatible with Dalena's type blood.

Two women had volunteered their Type A+ blood.

"No," came the reply. "Female blood not acceptable as Danilo Dalena might become gay after the operation. Only male blood are accepted."

The operation had been resorted to after Dalena could not fully recover from a road accident a while back. You see, walking, being Dalena's favorite sport, he's virtually on the road most of the time when he's not painting. One morning, Dalena, hearing impaired on one ear, got sideswiped by a vehicle. Initially, he escaped major injuries until, some weeks later, he would complain of pain in the nape and in his back. Further X-rays revealed a damaged vertebra.

"I'm fine," Dalena said to me yesterday, talking on the phone from his room at St. Luke's. "At least it's quiet now here."

Dalena had checked in at the hospital just barely ahead of FPJ, who was admitted on Saturday night (Dec. 11). And therein lies the drama within the drama-turned-tragedy of the saga leading to FPJ's death on Dec. 14.

Originally, Dalena was to be roomed at 336.

"It didn't have windows and I'm a claustrophobic, so I refused it," said Dalena of Room 336. "When I saw Room 333, I immediately said this is it because it has windows."

Room 333 was next to the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) where FPJ was taken in after suffering that massive stroke on Saturday.

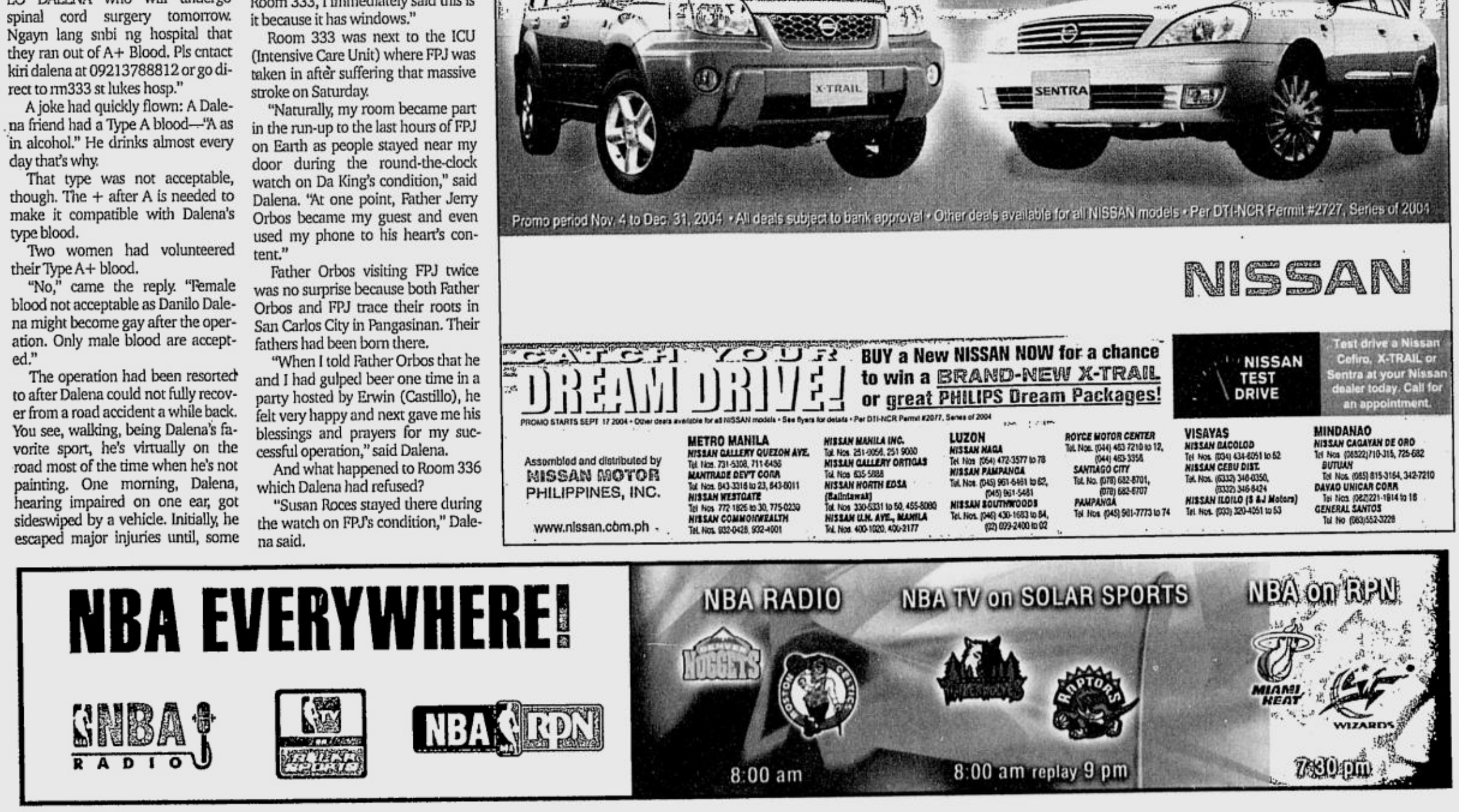
"Naturally, my room became part in the run-up to the last hours of FPJ on Earth as people stayed near my door during the round-the-clock watch on Da King's condition," said Dalena. "At one point, Father Jerry Orbos became my guest and even used my phone to his heart's content."

Father Orbos visiting FPJ twice was no surprise because both Father Orbos and FPJ trace their roots in San Carlos City in Pangasinan. Their fathers had been born there.

"When I told Father Orbos that he and I had gulped beer one time in a party hosted by Erwin (Castillo), he felt very happy and next gave me his blessings and prayers for my successful operation," said Dalena.

And what happened to Room 336 which Dalena had refused?

"Susan Roces stayed there during the watch on FPJ's condition," Dalena said.



Sonics rout Lakers; Webber lifts Kings

NEW YORK—Rashard Lewis notched a personal season-high of 37 points, including seven three-pointers, as the Seattle SuperSonics swept aside the Los Angeles Lakers, 108-93, Tuesday to collect their 18th win of the season.

Kobe Bryant had 35 points in a losing effort while Ray Allen, who has had a public feud with the Lakers All-Star, contributed 26 for the Sonics, who improved to 10-1 at home and will host the league-leading Phoenix Suns Friday.

Seattle (18-4) took control in the second quarter, going on a 17-5 run to open up a 51-33 lead, and never let the 12-9 Lakers get closer than eight points.

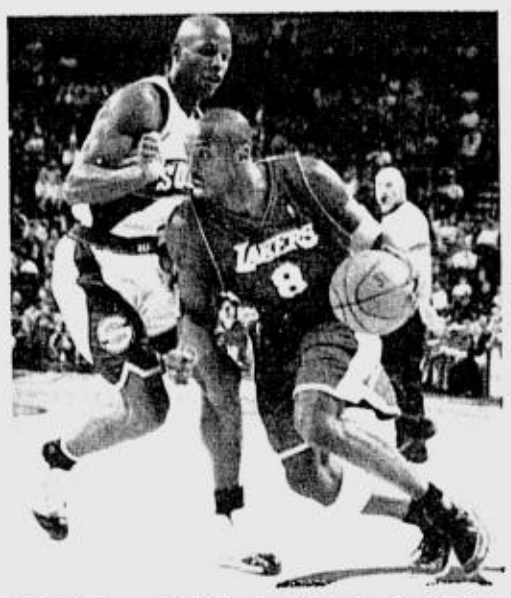
In Atlanta, Jamaal Tinsley totaled a season-high 29 points, including five in overtime, to help the undermanned Indiana Pacers break out of a seven-game losing streak to defeat the woeful Hawks, 108-97.

Indiana's lineup was decimated by suspensions stemming from an ugly brawl in the game with the Detroit Pistons last month but the Pacers finally got back in the win column to put away the 4-17 Hawks.

Fred Jones added 21 points and Reggie Miller 19 for the Pacers. Tinsley, who missed the previous three games with an ankle injury, picked up 14 successive points in the third quarter.

Tony Delk claimed a season-high 22 points for the Hawks, who have dropped six straight to the Pacers.

In Philadelphia, Allen Iverson scored 31 points and Willie Green added 17, all in the second half, as the 76ers rallied from an 18-point deficit to record their third consecutive win by downing the Denver Nuggets, 110-102.



KOBE Bryant (right) who feuded with Ray Allen in the offseason, tries to get around the Seattle gunner. AP

Green sparked the comeback after entering the game with three minutes to play in the third quarter, pouring in 13 points in the final seven minutes.

Carmelo Anthony posted 29 points while Kenyon Martin had a season-high 25 for the Nuggets, who have now dropped two in a row after opening up their seven-game road trip with back-to-back victories.

In Minnesota, the Timberwolves won for the eighth time in 10 games as Wally Szczerbiak fired a season's best 28 points in a 100-89 triumph over the Portland Trail Blazers.

Kevin Garnett chipped in with 19 points and 19 rebounds for the Timberwolves. Darius Miles scored 17 for the Blazers, who have lost four straight away from home.

In Milwaukee, Chris Webber hit a clutch three-pointer at the buzzer to lift Sacramento to an 89-86 win over the Bucks.

Mike Bibby led the Kings with 27 points and 10 rebounds while Webber finished with 23 as Sacramento (15-6) erased a 10-point, fourth-quarter deficit to register their 14th victory in 16 games.

Desmond Mason had 23 points for the slumping Bucks, who have won only three of their last 15.

In East Rutherford, Jamal Crawford scored 30 points as the New York Knicks beat the New Jersey Nets, 87-79.

In Charlotte, Emeka Okafor drained a pair of free throws with 5.7 seconds left in overtime to give the expansion Bobcats a 94-93 victory over the New Orleans Hornets.

Back in Charlotte for the first time since the franchise moved to New Orleans two years ago, the Hornets received a warm welcome from their old fans but it was far from a happy homecoming as they absorbed their 19th loss in 20 games.

In Salt Lake City, Mehmet Okur had a double-double and hit three big free throws in the final 10 seconds as the Utah Jazz edged the Los Angeles Clippers, 93-91.

In Dallas, Clifford Robinson collected a season's best 25 points as the Golden State Warriors overcame the Mavericks, 111-107. *Reuters*

CHRIS Webber: Buzzer-beating triple REUTERS

URBL

Huskers take trophy, donation back home

SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga—The Quezon Huskers hung tough in the final three minutes to outlast host Harbour Centre-Pampanga, 88-84, and bag third place yesterday in the United Regional Basketball League at the University of the Assumption Gym.

Rodel Mallari and Larry Rodriguez then controlled the boards and hit back-to-back baskets to break the back of Harbour Centre, which had rallied to within three, and give the Huskers an 83-76 that greased their path to victory.

It was a big comeback for Mallari, who hasn't seen action due to a knee injury. He topscored with 18 points in the deciding match.

The Pampanga squad showed a lot of grace in defeat, though, as team owner Mikee Romero handed through URBL Commissioner Ramon Fernandez and Harbour Centre team manager Gil Cortez a sizeable donation to Huskers team owner Benny Brizuela to benefit victims of the typhoons that recently ravaged Quezon province.

The Huskers will also bring home to Quezon the first trophy awarded by the league sponsored by adidas, Lactovitale, PCSO, Pagcor and Napoleon VSOP Brandy.

Game Three of the best-of-five championship series between M. Lhuillier-Cebu City and the Ilocos Sur Snipers was still being played as of presstime.

Ariel Garcia put up Harbour-Centre's last stand, drilling a lay-up to move to within 79-76, 3:20 to play.

But Mallari took charge in the stretch to settle the issue.

Harbour Centre actually controlled the early goings behind VJ Santos who banged in 10 points that erected a 27-16 first quarter lead.

Mallari, however, led Quezon to a 46-45 halftime edge.

The scores:

QUEZON 88—Mallari 18, Echavez 17, A Rodriguez 16, Tierra 14, Marquez 9, L Rodriguez 7, Booker 5, Taguines 2, Ferrer 0, San Diego 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 84—Bansil 17, Santos 14, Manalo 12, A Garcia 12, David 10, Liangco 9, Bognot 8, Dizon 2, Yambao 0, Nanninga 0.

Quarters: 16-27, 46-45, 71-66, 88-84.

Buhain: From PSC to GAB

From page A23

will always cherish this."

His resignation was met with mixed reactions from the sports sector considering that Buhain, a former top swimmer and son-in-law of executive secretary Eduardo Ermita, was in the thick of preparations for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games, which the country is hosting on Nov. 27 to Dec. 5.

The PSC has earlier been tasked by President Macapagal-Arroyo to come up with a national contingent strong enough to capture the SEAG overall championship in the country's third hosting of the competition.

Other sports officials who refused to be named welcomed the change of leadership, which coincided with the changing of the guards at the POC where former Tarlac Rep. Peping Cojuangco is set to serve as president on Jan. 1.

Buhain, who in 1993 led an athletes' revolt that ousted then chair Aparicio Mequi, used his illustrious career as an athlete to snag the top PSC post, which has been held before by retired politicians, academicians and technocrats.

However, his stay in the P500 million-a-year agency was also marked by controversies that included charges of illegal importation of thoroughbred horses, sexual harassment and calls for a lifestyle check on him and his top aides.

Buhain, a former Athlete of the Year who won six swim golds in the 1991 SEAG, also thanked his predecessors for laying down the foundation of grassroots and local sports development.

GUYITO WILD HUNT

REWARDS

The wild chase is on for Inquirer's Guyito!

Look for the specially-marked Guyito entry form in the pages of Inquirer. Cut out, put your name, address and signature. Drop at designated drop boxes for a shot at your most wanted rewards!

Join the fun as Inquirer celebrates 19 exciting years of giving Filipinos no less than balanced news and fearless views. Hunt from September 27 to December 14, 2004!

Prizes (One winner per item) **Grand Prize**
Toyota Altis 1.6J M/T

MONTHLY DRAW

October Draw
IPAQ rz1710 • Olympus MJU300 • Finepix a202 • Epson CX5300 Printer • 20 GB iPod • Blackberry 7230 • Canon A70 Digicam

November Draw
20 GB iPod • HP dj450 Portable Printer • Olympus MJU400 • Fujipix f402 • Epson CX5300 Printer • Panasonic X400 • Motorola MPX 200 • Motorola C380

Consolation
Palm Zire 72 • IPAQ • Olympus 400 • Finepix f401 • Epson Printer • Panasonic X500 • Panasonic X700 • Blackberry 7230 • Canon A70 Digicam Motorola E398 • Motorola C650 • Motorola V3 • 40GB iPod • 20GB iPod Motorola C650 • Panasonic X300 • Palm Zire 31 • Epson CX5300 Printer • Canon A70 Digicam

PROMO MECHANICS:

a) Each copy of the Philippine Daily Inquirer will contain a specially-marked coupon featuring Guyito, the broadsheet's illustrated carabao icon, hidden in one of the pages. The hidden Guyito will appear in the PDI daily from September 27 to December 14, 2004.

b) Participant can then cut-out the Guyito coupon, write down legibly his/her name, address, contact number and affix signature on the blanks provided, and send to Philippine Daily Inquirer offices or drop in drop boxes. Only original Guyito coupons will be considered valid entries. Original coupons are marked with the Guyito Wild Hunt promo logo.

c) Only one Guyito coupon will be featured in each Inquirer issue from Monday to Saturday. There will be two Guyito coupons featured in Inquirer every Sunday.

d) There are two ways to send entries:
   1. Mail to:
      Guyito Wild Hunt: Inquirer 19th Anniversary Promo
      c/o PDI Building Don Chino Roces Avenue,
      Corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City
   2. Drop in drop boxes located at the following:
      Robinsons Movieworld cinema lobbies (all branches)
      Glorietta Mall
      Glorietta 1 Cinema Lobby
      Glorietta 4 Cinema Lobby
      Greenbelt 1 Cinema Lobby
      Greenbelt 1 Mall
      Greenbelt 3 Customer Service
      Greenbelt 3 Cinema Lobby
      Alabang Town Center Mall
      Alabang Town Center Cinema Lobby
      Ayala Center Cebu Mall
      Ayala Center Cebu Cinema Lobby
      Netopia (all branches)
      LBC (all branches)

e) For the monthly draws, deadline of entries are on October 17 and November 17. Monthly winners will be drawn on October 22 and November 22, 3pm, at the Philippine Daily Inquirer head office. Winners will be notified thru a phone call and registered mail from a Philippine Daily Inquirer representative. Non-winning entries per draw will be included in the succeeding draws. The list of monthly winners will be published within two weeks after the draw.

f) Deadline of entries for the grand draw is on December 14. Mailed-in entries must be received by December 17. Grand draw and consolation prize winners will be drawn on December 21, 2004 at 12nn. Grand prize winner will win a brand new Toyota Altis.

g) A winner can only win once per draw. If a name gets drawn more than once, he/she gets the prize of higher value. Prize categories are: monthly prize, consolation prize, and grand prize.

h) All winners below 18 years of age need to be with their legal guardian to claim prize. Both the minor and the parent/guardian should present valid identification. The latter should also present proof that he/she is the legal guardian of the minor.

i) Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.

j) For more questions call Ms. Ching dela Cruz of Inquirer's Marketing Department at 897-8808 loc 237.

k) Metro Manila winners may claim their prizes at the Philippine Daily Inquirer office at the Philippine Daily Inquirer Building, Chino Roces Avenue (Pasong Tamo) corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City. Provincial winners may claim their prizes at the nearest Inquirer office indicated on the registered mail. Winners may claim their prize from October 18.

l) All winners must present the following to an authorized Philippine Daily Inquirer representative:
   (1) Two valid IDs with complete real name, picture and correct address. Photocopies of any of the two documents (i.e. birth certificate, marriage contract, SSS ID, driver's license, school ID and/or passport) should be submitted upon claiming of prize.
   (2) Registered mail that the Philippine Daily Inquirer sent to the winner of the Guyito Wild Hunt raffle draw.
   (3) Representative's valid identification and authorization letter from the winner (if prize is claimed through a representative)

m) All prizes must be claimed within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification call and registered mail (whichever comes last) from an authorized Philippine Daily Inquirer representative.

n) All unclaimed prizes after the said date shall be forfeited in favor of PDI with prior DTI approval.

PROMO EXCLUSIONS:

All employees of Philippine Daily Inquirer, Harrison Communications and their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are not eligible to join the promo.

Per DTI Permit No. 2147, Series of 2004.

See'emall!

AYALA CINEMAS THX

Movies/schedules may change without prior notice. For verification call 729-7777

ATC (Alabang Town Center)	G1 (Glorietta 1)	G4 (Glorietta 4)		GB3 (Greenbelt 3)	ACC (Ayala Center Cebu)
THX 1 BAD SANTA	1 GEORGE & THE DRAGON	1 THE POLAR EXPRESS	5 HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 1 BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON	1 CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
2 BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON	2 PASIYAM	2 BIRTH	6 BAD SANTA	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 BAD SANTA	2 PASIYAM
3 BIRTH		GUARANTEED SEATS THX 3 BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON	7 NATIONAL TREASURE	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 ALEXANDER	3 OUT OF REACH
4 THE POLAR EXPRESS	3 HONEY	4 2046		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 BIRTH	4 MAY
5 NATIONAL TREASURE	4 HAROLD & KUMAR	GB1 (Greenbelt 1): 1 BRIDGET JONES: THE EDGE OF REASON; 2 BAD SANTA		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 NATIONAL TREASURE	5 TAXI

At the Activity Center

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	AYALA CENTER CEBU
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Concert for cancer patients

CANCER survivors will celebrate life with a fund-raising walk and concert for indigent cancer patients on Sunday, Dec. 19, at 3 p.m.

The affair, under the umbrella of "A Celebration of Life," consists of "A Walk for Life" by renowned musician and cancer survivor Toti Fuentes and his son Damien at 3 p.m. from Sanctuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park to Oakwood Park at Glorietta 4 where they will be joined by other cancer survivors and supporters.

Part two is the concert "A Song for Life" at 7:30 p.m. at Merk's Bar Bistro on Level 3 of Greenbelt 3, with Toti at the keyboard. All performing artists who want to help raise funds are welcome to join.

Toti, given only three months to live exactly a year ago, is celebrating his first anniversary of surviving a rare form of cancer.

Joining Toti is Che Serrano, a writer and PR business communicator battling stage 3A ovarian cancer.

Those interested in getting involved may get in touch with Maridel at 0917-7052250 or Astrud at 0927-3530157.

Show tickets are P1,000 and P500, inclusive of one drink and one appetizer.

For reservations, contact Merk's at 757-4720 and 757-4721.

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 2000 — Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Target Mall (Sta. Rosa, Laguna) tel (049) 837.0926
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 (DTS) RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 PA-SIYAM
2 (DTS) BRIDGET JONES
3 (DOLBY) OUT OF REACH
4 POLAR EXPRESS

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall (Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 OUT OF REACH
2 (DOLBY) BRIDGET JONES
3 (DTS) POLAR EXPRESS
4 PA-SIYAM

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix (Urdaneta) tel (075) 568.6771
1 FIRST DAUGHTER
2 BCUZ OF U
3 (DOLBY) NATIONAL TREASURE

Lianas MovieCity (Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) OUT OF REACH
2 TOOLBOX MURDER
3 (DTS) POLAR EXPRESS
4 PA-SIYAM
5 BRIDGET JONES

Mega Center Mall (Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 BCUZ OF U
2 SAW
3 (DTS) TAXI
4 (DOLBY) OUT OF REACH

Fiesta World Mall (Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 DARKNESS
2 OUT OF REACH
3 SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
4 THE SIN

Cinema 2000 Metrotown (Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 SAW
2 FOREGOTTEN
3 (DOLBY) ALEXANDER
4 (DTS) POLAR EXPRESS

Jade Cinema (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY DS) CELLULAR
2 PA-SIYAM
3 (DTS DS) FIRST DAUGHTER
4 THE FOREGOTTEN

Cine Nepo (Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 PA-SIYAM
2 CELLULAR
3 (DOLBY) THE FOREGOTTEN
4 (DTS) FIRST DAUGHTER

Cine Nepo (Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
2 SAW
3 (DOLBY) FOREGOTTEN
4 (DTS) NATIONAL TREASURE

Centre Plaza Cinema (Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 SKY CAPTAIN
2 SHARK TALE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart (Plaridel) tel (044) 7953320
1 PA-SIYAM
2 ALEXANDER
3 (DOLBY) POLAR EXPRESS

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2 DARKNESS
3 THE FORGOTTEN
4 SUPERBABIES: BABY GENIUSES 2
5 BUKAS MAY UMAGA

1 PA-SIYAM
2 ALEXANDER
3 SEED OF CHUCKY
4 BRIDGET JONES 2
5 ONE MISSED CALL

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1 THE FORGOTTEN
2 DARKNESS
3 BUKAS MAY UMAGA
4 CELLULAR
5 MAY

1 OUT OF REACH
2 TAXI
3 SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
4 THE GRUDGE

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2 BIRTH
3 MAY
4 SHREK 2
5 NATIONAL TREASURE
6 NED KELLY

1 AFTER THE SUNSET
2 TAXI
3 BUKAS MAY UMAGA
4 SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
5 THE SIN
6 DARKNESS

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1 THE POLAR EXPRESS
2 BRIDGET JONES 2
3 NATIONAL TREASURE
4 CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
5 CELLULAR
6 AFTER THE SUNSET

1 WHITE CHICKS
2 CHRISTMAS WITH THE KRANKS
3 NATIONAL TREASURE
4 SURVIVING CHRISTMAS
5 SAW
6 DARKNESS

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Get the celebrities

From page A29

nivale" finale special (episodes 11 and 12).

On Cinemax, Dec. 16 at 11:45 a.m., "A Few Good Men." 5 p.m., "Cool Hand Luke." 7 p.m., "Nuts." Dec. 17 at 2 p.m., "Dead in the Water." 3:30 p.m., "My Geisha." 9 p.m., "Black Hawk Down." 11:20 p.m., "American Crime." 4:15 a.m., "Strictly Ballroom."

Nickelodeon treats

THE NICKELODEON channel screens the most wanted Nicktoons and Nick flicks this month. The special Yuletide treats include a TV-movie special, a storytelling trip around Asia, the 100th episode of "All That," and a special telecast of "Fairly Odd Parents."

Watch out for dual delights on the channel's Double Decker weekends. Journey with "Tenali Raman," Krishna's favorite wise man; into the lush Malaysian jungle with "Lat the Kampung Boy," and with the "Little Tao Shu," the Chinese boy and his pet toad.

Catch the TV movie "Rocket Power" on Dec. 19, as well as "Cow at the Moo-vies" and "100 Deeds for Eddie McDowd" on its new season.

Tune in as Cosmo introduces his favorite holiday-themed Nick shows from Dec. 20 to 26. On Christmas Day, there will be a five-hour viewing marathon. And New Year's Ever will feature a special "Miss Spider's Sunny Patch Kids" telecast, *plus* an hour-long special to celebrate the 100th episode of all that!

'CNN Business Traveler'

DON'T miss "CNN Business Traveler" at 9: 30 p.m. on Dec. 16, and 7:30 p.m. on Dec. 18. Join host Richard Quest as he explores one of China's biggest ports and key business hubs. Shanghai.

Quest interviews entrepreneur Yue-Sai Kan, whose cosmetics line was recently acquired by L'Oreal, and jazz musician Fu Hwa, who takes viewers on a musical tour of Shanghai's past and present.

Get the celebrities

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

REALITY TV shows, especially the "challenge"-oriented programs, used to capture viewers' attention and empathy by making life difficult for their non-celebrity contestants. They would be required to eat worms and other yukky stuff, wallow in filth, and subject their strength, physical endurance and gumption to terrifying tests.

After the shock value of these gambits palled, the shows hit upon the idea of replacing the unknowns with celebrities, to ratings-boosting effect.

All of a sudden, many more viewers watched the reality challenges. At first, the people behind the shows thought that this was simply "star value" again at work. In time, however, it became clear that viewers' attraction to the celebrity challenges was more complicated than just the pleasure of seeing their idols on the small screen one more time.

This time around, the stars were being subjected to harrowing tests and indignities, instead of being shown at their usual glamorous best.

Viewers liked this twist because it enabled them to get to know their favorite celebrities as people, sweating, hurting, getting dirty and complaining just like everybody else.

Less positively, some viewers appear to have a perverse attraction to challenges that subject celebrities to indignities and harrowing and even dangerous tests.

They seem to derive a nasty kind of pleasure in seeing stars so harried and debased. It's as if this is their way of getting back at celebrities who are more beautiful, privileged, popular and wealthier than they are.

The situation is dauntingly complex on a psychological level. And the shows knowingly take advantage of the different factors and considerations involved, because they can be depended on to keep those perversely fascinated viewers watching.

Trouble is, even the "get the celebrity" ploys eventually pall, so TV challenges have to think of even more difficult and offputting tests for fresh batches of stellar "victims."

Will there come a time when even money- and exposure-hungry celebrities end up nixing these new challenges as too exhausting and gross for them to undergo? As they say in show biz, *depende sa tindi ng pangangailangan!*

But, whatever the additional perks, they should really draw the line at some point, don't you think? Or else, their stellar sheen would be compromised and debased beyond endurance.

That's a "reality" challenge we wouldn't want to see them tackling. There *are* limits, even for celebrities willing to subject themselves to the unendurable, for whatever material benefits it may bring.

Movies on TV

ON HBO, Dec. 16 at 12:55 p.m., "Two Weeks' Notice." 12:50 a.m., "Doc Hollywood." Dec. 17 at 3:15 p.m., "Catch Me If You Can." 10:55 p.m., "Maid in Manhattan." 12:40 a.m., "Car-

GET/ A28

'Tito' Ronnie lives on

From page A30

My first movie, 'Divina Gracia,' was with FPJ Productions. I remember the times *pag naglalambing siya na dalhan namin siya ng mga* favorite food *niya*. I will miss his thoughtfulness. He would send gifts even when there were no special occasions."

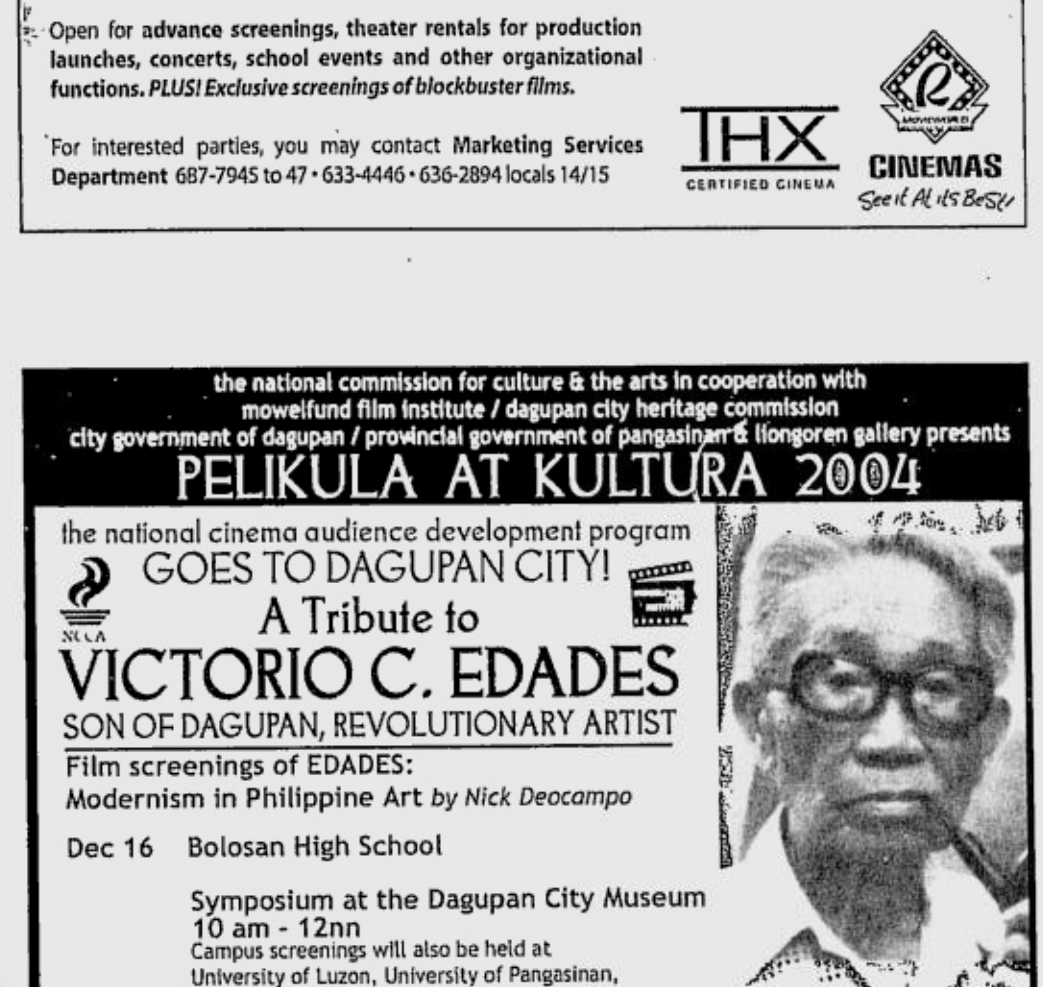
Gina Alajar: "I used to make fruitcakes to sell during the holidays. I called Tito Ron to sell some to him. He bought 10. After two days, he called me up and told me that it was the best fruitcake he ever tasted and he ordered 50 more."

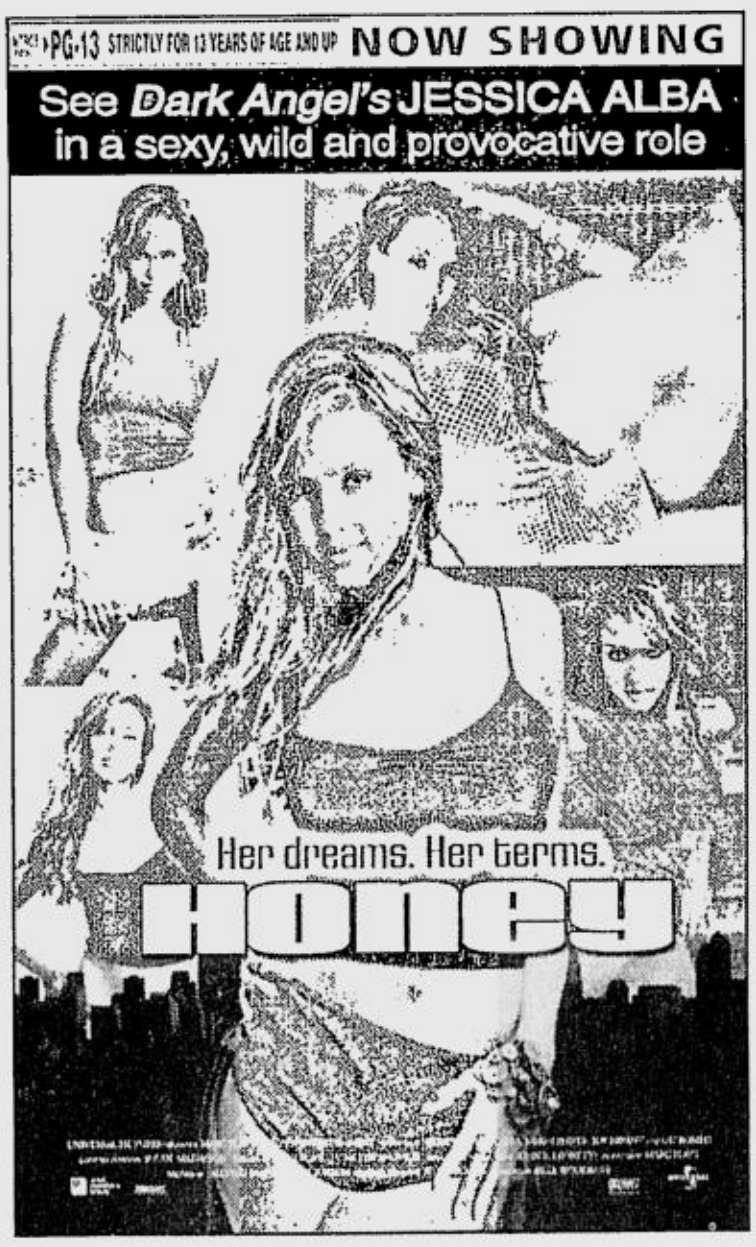
Cesar Montano: "I remember when I was starting out in show biz and my first acting job was a bit player in the movie 'Padrino.' I was nobody then but I noticed that Ninong Ron treated everybody equally."

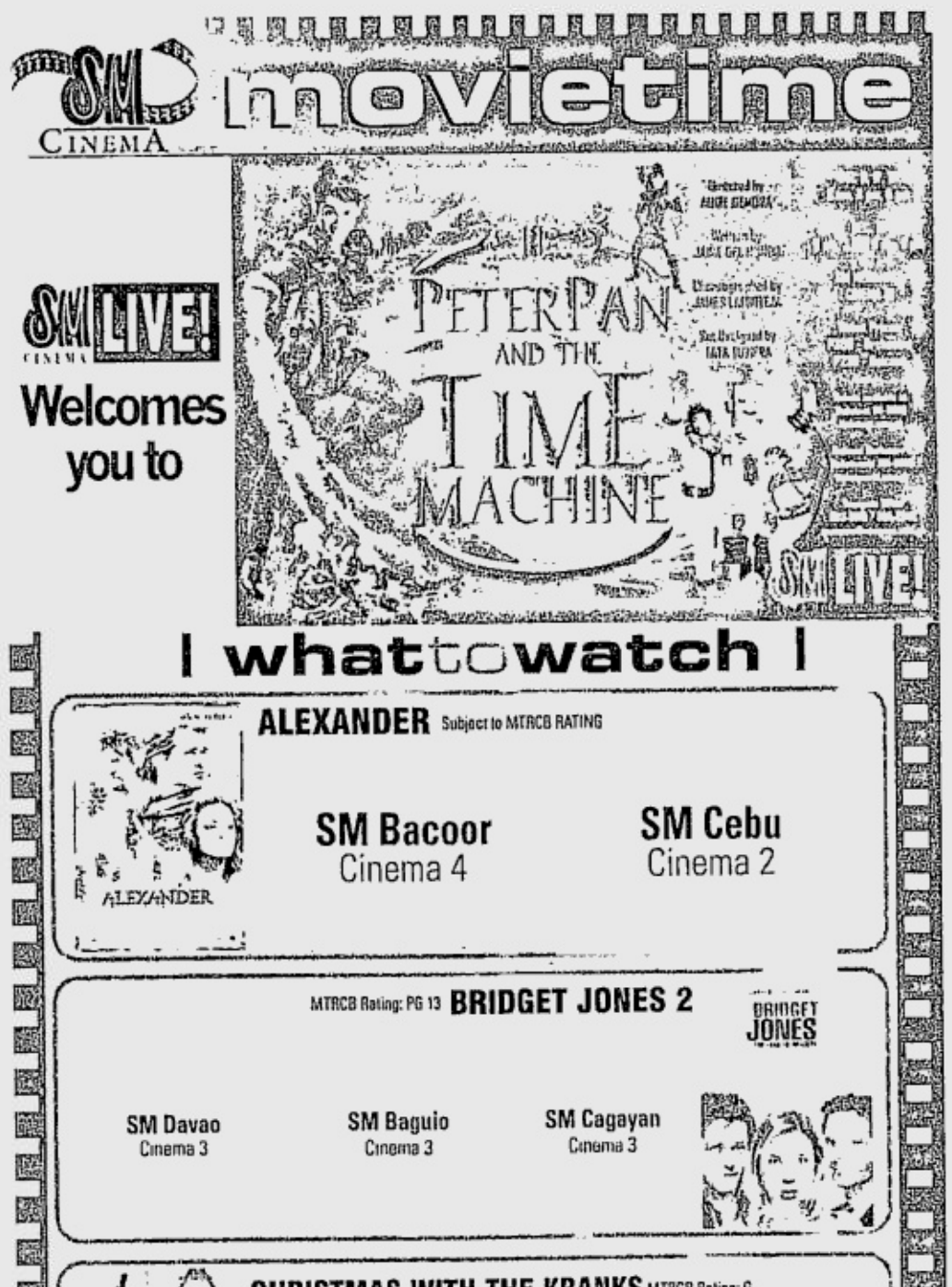
Jolina Magdangal: "I only got to meet Tiot Ron once but I was immediately struck by his kindness. We were in Pampanga promoting movies for the Metro Manila Film Festival and we talked about doing a movie together. Until we parted I could hardly believe that I was seated next to Da King. *Ang bait niya! Kahit minsan lang kami nag*meet, *grabe ang* impact *sa akin*."

Albert Martinez: "There are just too many wonderful things about Tito Ron to mention. One thing that stands out in my memory though is that during shootings he made sure it was like a *fiesta* celebration from breakfast to dinner and even during midnight snacks. *Alagang-alaga niya lahat ng* cast and crew from the superstars to the utility men."

*For feedback, e-mail watering*hole-*shangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com*







PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ENTERTAINMENT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2004

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Louie C. Camino
Assistant Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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'Tito' Ronnie lives on

PEOPLE like *Tito* **Ronnie Poe** seem immortal.

Immortality is not about having superpowers. It is about how many lives we have touched. In that sense, Tito Ron truly lives on.

I will never forget the time I had a long chat with Tito Ron. It only happened once but that encounter has had such a profound effect on me.

I joined him, **Anjanette Abayari** and the rest of the cast of their movie during their victory party. **Tito Ronnie** fondly called me "proxy" because every time he was a *ninong* at a wedding, I happened to be my mom's proxy. I even told him that if and when I get hitched again myself, I would want him to be my *ninong*. He smiled, "Sure, proxy! *Kahit saan pa yung kasal mo.* Basta make sure the guy won't make you cry or else lagot *siya sa akin*!"

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

I was surprised that he was aware of the controversy I was embroiled in at that time regarding my controversial relationship with an action star. He talked some sense into me. "*Napanood ko yung* interview *mo sa* TV," he said. "You sounded so mad. You better stop talking about the issue already. Here's my direct line. Call me when you feel bad again."

I was speechless. Right there and then I saw for myself what the so-called FPJ mystique is all about. When you were around him, he made you feel that he was really there for you. Even in his absence, we can still feel his presence.

Thank you, Tito Ron, for giving me a taste of fatherly concern which has eluded me all my life. For me, there will never ever be a proxy for you.

Stars talk about Tito Ron, too.

Lorna Tolentino: "I am an FPJ baby.

'TITO'/ A29

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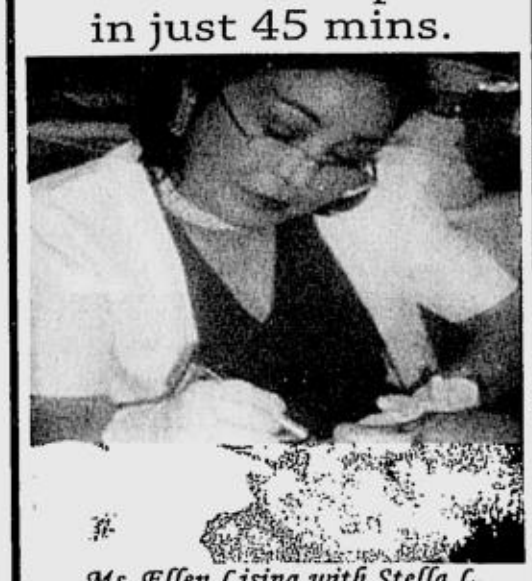

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Jan. 8-9	Farmers Plaza	Dec. 18	Gaisano Davao, Matina Town Square
Jan. 15-16	SM Megamall	Dec. 19	SM Davao, Gaisano Davao

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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2004 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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OFW remittances up 9.5% in 10 months

By Doris C. Dumlao

REMITTANCES from overseas Filipino workers rose by 10.1 percent in October to $741 million from a year ago, fueled by funds earmarked for Christmas spending.

"With the onset of the holiday season, overseas workers increase their fund transfers to defray holiday-related expenses of their beneficiaries," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said yesterday.

This brought the cumulative 10-month OFW remittances to $6.9 billion, 9.5 percent higher than the $6.3 billion sent in the same period last year, according to BSP data.

"This trend, expected to be sustained with the start of the remittances for the holiday season, strengthens expectations that the 6-percent growth target in 2004 will be exceeded," Buenaventura said.

The BSP chief said the rise in remittances could be attributed to the higher deployment of Filipinos abroad, particularly of higher paid skilled and professional workers as well as the improved capture of remittances by banks.

Buenaventura noted the higher deployment of both land- and sea-based workers based on data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

For the first 10 months of the year, total deployment grew by 4.1 percent to 760,425 from a year ago. Land-based workers were up by 4.2 percent at 572,535 while sea-based workers rose by 3.6 percent at 187,890 from comparative levels last year.

Buenaventura said there was likewise higher deployment of higher-paid skilled and professional Filipino workers such as nurses, health workers, office and food service staff and production-related workers.

"The growing number of Filipinos working abroad encouraged local commercial banks to widen their reach in countries where large OFWs are deployed by increasing the number of bank remittance centers abroad and strengthening and establishing tie-ups with overseas financial service sectors and non-bank money couriers," Buenaventura added.

He said the United States, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom remained as the Philippines' major sources of OFW remittances.

Early this year, the BSP projected only a 3-percent full-year growth in OFW remittances, considering stiff competition from workers originating from other developing countries like India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. But the deployment of more workers and the more attractive peso-dollar exchange rate increased the flow of remittances, prompting an upward revision in its forecast to 6 percent.

Overall, OFW remittances now account for almost 11 percent of the country's gross domestic product and 16 percent of the current account surplus.

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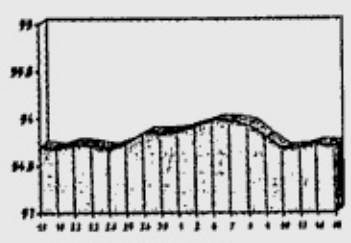


NOVEMBER DECEMBER

₱ 56.30 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 15, 2004

¥ 105.09 = $ 1
As of 5 p.m., Dec. 15, 2004

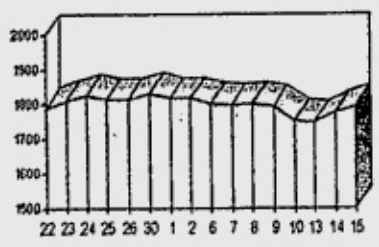
GOLD: $ 437.10-437.60
per ounce Hong Kong, Dec. 15, 2004

December 15, 2004 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.751654	1.000000	56.2970
Japan	Yen	0.007123	0.009477	0.5335
United Kingdom	Pound	1.449714	1.928700	108.5800
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.096662	0.128599	7.2397
Switzerland	Franc	0.651403	0.866626	48.7884
Canada	Dollar	0.608380	0.809389	45.5662
Singapore	Dollar	0.455603	0.606134	34.1235
Australia	Dollar	0.568616	0.756487	42.5879
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.993829	2.652590	149.3329
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.200446	0.266674	15.0129
Brunei	Dollar	0.454227	0.604303	34.0204
Indonesia	Ruplah	0.000080	0.000107	0.0060
Thailand	Baht	0.019020	0.025304	1.4245
UAE	Dirham	0.204660	0.272279	15.3285
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.330400	74.8975
Argentina	Peso	0.253082	0.336700	18.9552
Brazil	Real	0.271846	0.361664	20.3606
Denmark	Kroner	0.134502	0.178942	10.0739
India	Rupee	0.017063	0.022701	1.2780
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.197830	0.263193	14.8170
Mexico	New Peso	0.066772	0.088834	5.0011
New Zealand	Dollar	0.532786	0.708818	39.9043
Norway	Kroner	0.121457	0.161587	9.0969
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012654	0.016835	0.9478
South Africa	Rand	0.131551	0.175015	9.8528
Korea	Won	0.000710	0.000945	0.0532
Sweden	Kroner	0.111491	0.148328	8.3504
Syria	Pound	0.014480	0.019264	1.0845
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023135	0.030779	1.7328
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000392	0.000522	0.0294

STOCK MARKET

Shares end higher

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



SHARES finished higher yesterday, in step with many Asian markets, as investors continued to hunt for blue-chip bargains following the index's recent decline, traders said.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index ended up 19.16 points, or 1.1 percent, at 1,794.89. The index lost 2.9 percent in three straight sessions before recovering by 1.6 percent Tuesday.

(See stock market report on Page B2)

"Investors focused on select blue chips, such as those in telecoms and property," said BPI Securities senior manager Roberto Cano.

Gainers led decliners 51 to 22, while 38 stocks were unchanged.

PLDT was the most actively traded stock, ending up 2.4 percent at P1,290, after its American depositary receipts gained 1.6 percent in New York Tuesday.

Globe also rose 1.6 percent to close at P930.

The two stocks were unaffected by ratings agency Fitch's announcement earlier yesterday that it has revised its outlook for the companies' long-term foreign currency rating to negative from stable. Traders said the move was expected as it reflected Fitch's recent action on the Philippines' long-term ratings.

SM Prime rose 2.7 percent to P7.70, after the country's largest mall operator yesterday confirmed a report that it was confident of sustaining net profit growth of 10 to 11 percent on year in the fourth quarter.

Macroasia gained 44 percent to P2.90 following a block sale of 3.35 million shares.

The Asian Development Bank's warning, released shortly before the market closed, that the country faces economic instability if it fails to swiftly put in place much needed fiscal reforms didn't have much impact.

AP

US mutual fund buys 2.86% of BDO

SMALLCAP World Fund Inc., an American mutual fund, has bought a 2.86-percent stake in Henry Sy-led Banco de Oro Universal Bank (BDO) for P637 million.

In a report to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), BDO said SCWF has bought 26 million shares of the bank as of Dec. 9 at an average price of roughly P24.52 each. BDO closed at P24.75 yesterday.

SCWF, managed by Capital Research and Management Co., seeks to provide long-term growth of capital by investing in the stocks of smaller companies in the United States and around the world.

At least 80 percent of its assets are normally invested in equities of issuers typically having market capitalizations from $50 million to $2 billion.

Some of SCWF's assets are placed in media companies, commercial banks, commercial services, Internet software services and oil and gas companies.

After its recent sale of shares to international investors from Asia and Europe, BDO said the biggest shareholder is still the SM Group with 47.5 percent followed by Cambridge group at 18.7 percent and the DBS of Singapore at 5.3 percent.

BDO recently secured regulatory approval that allowed foreign investors to buy an additional 15-percent stake in the bank to boost trading of its shares. The sale of secondary shares last November raised roughly $50 million.

This increased the bank's free float to 28 percent from 13 per-

US/ B5

INTEREST RATES

December 15, 2004- MART1 Rates Benchmark Interest Rates	MART 1 15-Dec-04	MART 1 14-Dec-04
1 Month	8.2883	8.3089
3 Months	8.405	8.3783
6 Months	9.2367	9.2433
1 Year	10.2125	10.2161
2 Years	11.1089	11.1214
3 Years	11.7018	11.7036
4 Years	12.2833	12.275
5 Years	12.7417	12.76
7 Years	13.3717	13.4143
10 Years	13.7583	13.7982
20 Years	13.9393	13.9946
25 Years	14.4483	14.4625

ADB says fiscal situation still critical

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank yesterday warned that the government's "grave" fiscal situation could trigger economic instability if not urgently addressed, an observation that was in stark contrast to Malacañang's claim that the fiscal crisis was over.

In its latest country report, the ADB said the fiscal challenge was the "most important of economic imbalances" in the Philippines and should be urgently corrected to reduce poverty and boost investor confidence.

"Inadequate domestic revenue mobilization has opened another front of vulnerability, as increasing debt to finance development spending makes the country susceptible to international interest rate increases and negative market sentiment," the ADB warned.

The bank explained that the fiscal imbalance was affecting the government's:

- capacity to implement public development projects and support public-private partnerships;
- medium-term strategy to move the economy to a higher, more sustainable growth path;
- planning and prioritizing development activities, and
- options on the most appropriate financing mechanisms.

The ADB said these, in turn, would materially impact on the relationship between the government and domestic stakeholder constituencies—legislative and judicial branches, business, civil society and nongovernment organizations—as well as that between the Philippines and development partners like multilateral and bilateral development agencies, international capital markets, commercial banks, investors, and credit rating agencies.

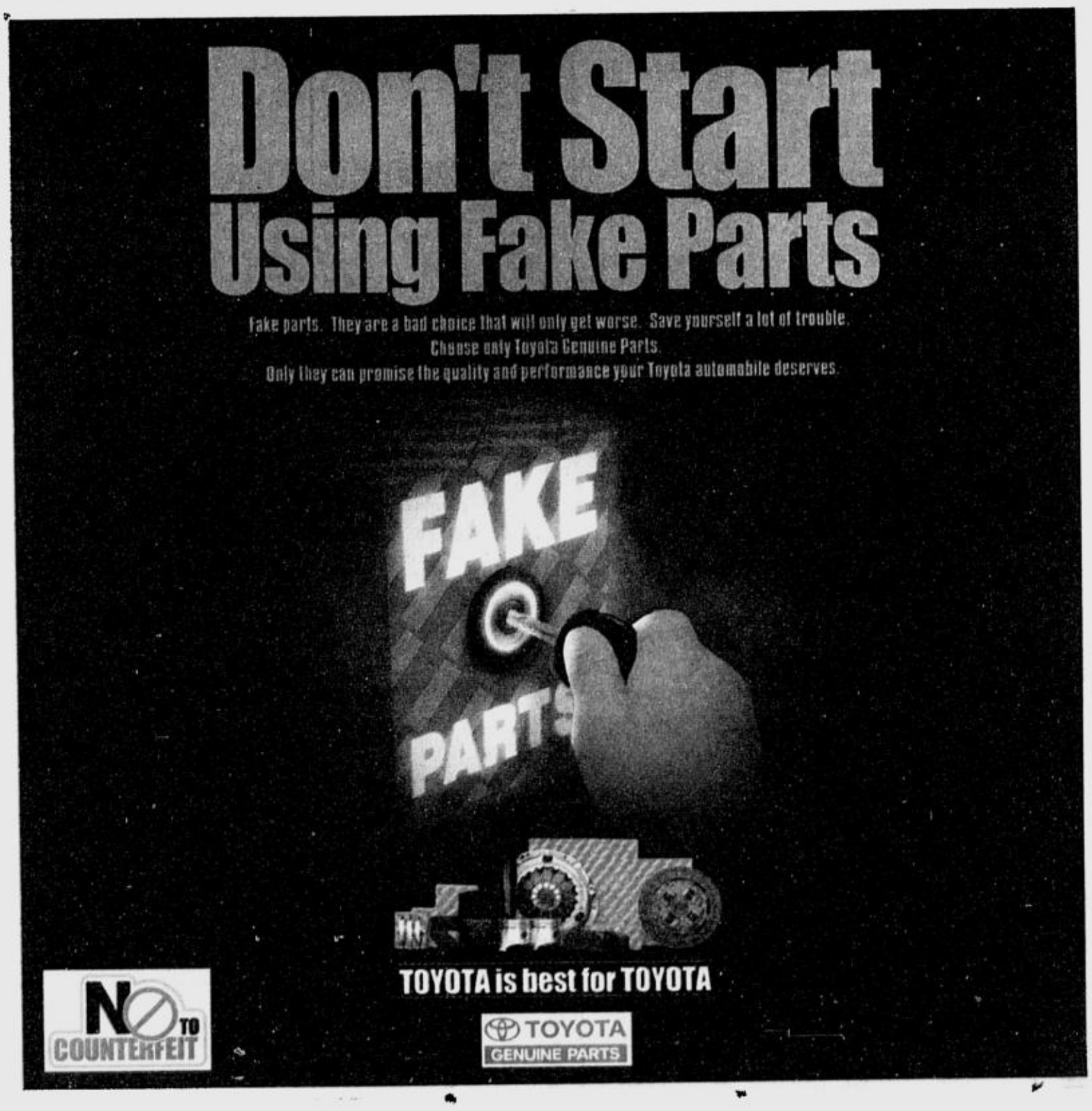
It noted that the core of the government's fiscal consolidation effort was a raft of new tax measures supplemented by improvement in collection efficiency for existing taxes, institutional strengthening of tax agencies, more effective public expenditure prioritization, enhanced transparency in public procurement, and reduced corruption.

"Restoring financial health in the public power sector is a necessary condition for fiscal consolidation. Also important are better cost-recovery and other reforms in all public corporations, and re-engineering the bureaucracy,"

ADB/ B2

VINCENT CABREZA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT WAGWAG. Bonuses have yet to be released, but droves of Baguio residents have started their holiday shopping on the sidewalks. Oblivious to the giant malls, shoppers prefer "wagwag" (secondhand bargain clothes) which regained its popularity after wagwag vendors shut down their stores in favor of guerrilla markets like this one.



UK's Fitch downgrades outlook on PLDT, Globe currency rating

By Clarissa S. Batino

FITCH Ratings has downgraded its outlook on the foreign currency rating of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. and Globe Telecom Inc. to negative from stable.

In a statement yesterday, the London-based rating agency said the move was in line with a recent decision to downgrade the Philippines' sovereign debt rating to negative from stable, due to continued fiscal weakness and increasing public sector debt.

Fitch said it kept a stable outlook on PLDT's long-term peso borrowing, believing this won't be affected by any adverse changes in the sovereign grade.

A downgrade in the rating or even the outlook tends to raise the cost of the rated firm's borrowing as it indicated more risks, giving investors more reason to demand a higher return for their placements.

PLDT and Globe are both reducing the level of their debt to save on interest payments and improve their profitability.

Both are limiting their exposure to dollar debt.

Debts of PLDT and Globe are both rated as BB by both Fitch and Standard & Poor's, or two notches below investment grade.

An equivalent mark of Ba2 is Moody's Investors Service's rating on the two phone giants although the New York-based agency had warned of a possible downgrade.

In April, Fitch upgraded the rating of PLDT's local and foreign currency debt to BB from BB minus at the back of plans then of PLDT's cash rich unit Smart Communications Inc. to buy debts and control of Pilipino Telephone Corp.

Smart will end up the majority owner of Piltel. It also earlier absorbed about $280 million of Piltel's obligations.

"PLDT itself has reported consistent improvement in its operating and financial profile over a sustained period. Much of the improvement has been driven by robust growth at its highly cash-generative and 100 percent-owned cellular subsidiary Smart although PLDT's fixed-line business is also free cash flow positive," noted Fitch in its statement.

PLDT is planning to cut debts by at least $500 million next year. The telecom giant is also scheduled to prepay a $106-million debt on Dec. 20.

The debt payment in the coming week would reduce PLDT's debts to about $2 billion.

PLDT's debt reduction strategy is more ambitious in 2005 compared to this year when it planned to shave off $350 million from its outstanding obligations. The decision to prepay debt would bring to $450 million the total borrowings retired in 2004.

Of the PLDT Group's outstanding $2.99 billion debt, $2.2 billion are owed by the fixed-line business.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of December 15, 2004)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank, Inc.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	15,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	24.25	24.75	24.25	24.75	611,500
Bank of the Phil. Islands	51	52	51	51.5	1,487,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	46.5	46.5	47.5	47.5	141,200
International Exch. Bank	16.75	16.75	16.75	16.75	243,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27.5	26	26.5	709,200
Philippine National Bank	22.5	23	22.5	23	13,200
Phil. Savings Bank	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	10,000
Security Bank Corp.	28.5	28.5	28.5	28.5	15,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	4,500
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	70,000
First Abacus Financial	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.6	20,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	173	173	173	173	10
Manulife Financial Corp.	2490	2490	2490	2490	230
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	12,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	112	112	111	112	2,180
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1810	1810	1810	1810	1,980
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	1,400
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.74	1.8	1.74	1.78	11,386,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	915	930	915	930	114,820
Ipeople Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	108,000
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.044	0.044	0.044	0.044	500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.033	0.033	0.032	0.033	5,300,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	1,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.48	2.55	2.48	2.5	4,580,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1275	1295	1275	1290	251,290
Ivantage Corp.	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.72	1,270,000
Philweb Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	37,800,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	16	16.25	16	16	43,700
Manila Electric Co. B	26	26	25.5	26	538,500
Petron Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	1,546,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	5,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.42	1.44	1.42	1.44	418,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.18	80,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.37	0.38	0.36	0.36	260,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.96	2.04	1.94	2	4,454,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31.5	32	31.5	32	142,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	28.5	28.5	28	28	228,500
Pancake House Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	15,000
San Miguel Corp. A	57.5	57.5	57.5	57.5	45,900
San Miguel Corp. B	78	78.5	78	78	31,600
Phil Tob Flue Cur & Redry	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	22,900
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	31,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.6	6.7	6.5	6.6	4,165,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.28	200,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	1,000,000
A. Soriano Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	100,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	9,000,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.2	1.3	1.2	1.28	80,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	0.84	1	0.84	0.99	750,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	60,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.71	0.72	0.7	0.7	12,350,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.235	0.25	0.235	0.25	110,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.115	0.115	0.11	0.115	680,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.8	3.85	3.8	3.85	2,252,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	0.97	0.98	0.97	0.98	110,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.55	4.6	1,481,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	31	31	30.5	31	726,200
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.15	3.2	3	3	450,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.1	2.95	2.1	2.9	18,051,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.2	1.22	1.2	1.22	1,100,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.39	4,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.155	0.155	500,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	100,000
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.05	3.75	3.05	3.75	217,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	100,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	10,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.175	0.175	0.175	0.175	520,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	10,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.42	1.5	1.4	1.5	164,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.61	0.63	0.61	0.62	2,010,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.98	1.1	0.97	1.04	11,770,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.63	0.65	0.61	0.61	690,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	10,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp.(Pdr)	18.25	18.5	18.25	18.5	712,200
Macroasia Corp. Warrants	0.225	0.3	0.2	0.25	4,000,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	2,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.9	7	6.9	7	11,562,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	30,000
C&P Homes Inc.	0.25	0.26	0.245	0.26	990,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.145	900,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	1,580,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.06	1.1	7,685,000
Golesco Land Inc.	0.0675	0.0725	0.0675	0.0725	200,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.24	2.24	2.24	2.24	10,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	100,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.52	710,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	100,000
Primex Corp.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	100,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1,080,000
SM Development Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.28	1.3	102,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.7	4,897,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co., Inc.B	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	50,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	54,700,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	3.75	3.95	3.75	3.95	67,000
Benguet Corp. A	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	34,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	3.35	3.35	3.05	3.3	56,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	3,980,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	16,870,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	192,500,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	146,500,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.6	0.61	0.6	0.6	2,320,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.65	0.69	0.65	0.66	10,030,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	400,000
OIL					
Intergoot Res. B	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	15,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	250,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	48,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.038	0.038	0.036	0.036	1,200,000

Motorola targets 20% of RP market by 2005

MOTOROLA, once the world leader in mobile handsets, plans to sell about a million phones in the Philippines next year, and double its market share to about 20 percent.

Motorola country manager Arlene Aran-Amarante said the company intended to achieve its goal by introducing more phone models in the market backed by aggressive marketing and branding moves.

Amarante said Motorola was coming from an estimated 9 percent share of the market as of the fourth quarter this year.

Motorola used to hold a 16 percent share of the market, but it shrunk to 9 percent as Motorola decided to concentrate on high-end models.

Amarante was originally targeting to end the year with about 24 percent of the market.

"We are back with vengeance. We are an attack brand because we have no market share to protect. We used to own this industry and we will again," she said.

This year, Amarante said sales grew four times and margins went up about seven times.

In 2005, she said the company would spend about $10 million or a little over half-a-billion pesos to strengthen the brand.

This year, the company spent only about $1 million on marketing.

Aggressive marketing is part of the global strategy of Motorola to become the leading mobile company in 1,000 days.

Amarante said the share of Motorola in the Philippines would further improve once the carriers introduce push-to-talk service and adopt the 3G technology.

She claimed Motorola was the biggest player in 3G handsets.

"3G is important for a country like the Philippines with millions of overseas workers. With 3G, families could already see each other while talking," she explained.

Motorola is launching 13 new handsets in the coming year, the same number of units unveiled this year.

She said there were handsets for all types of customers, adding that Motorola would continue to offer affordable handsets to the local market.

Clarissa S. Batino

NOTICE OF LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

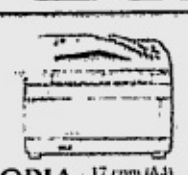
Notice is hereby given that at 10.00 AM on 1st March 2005 a hearing will be held before Mr. Justice Lugar-Mawson in the Hong Kong Court of First Instance in respect of absconder proceedings leading to a confiscation order under the provisions of Section 8 of the Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance, Cap 455 of the Laws of Hong Kong, in respect of the following persons and companies who are named as Respondents.

Amador PASTRANA Philippines passport ZZ017001 Date of birth 4th May 1972.	Respondent 1
Alpha Company Ltd Company No 15011	Respondent 2
Jindell Investment Ltd Company No 367520	Respondent 3
Jupiter Advisory Ltd Company No 407452	Respondent 4
First Pacific Company Ltd Company No 7009	Respondent 5
Systems International Ltd Company No105043B	Respondent 6
Calimax Enterprises Ltd Company No 407451	Respondent 7
Cyplus Company Ltd Company No 114160B	Respondent 8
Jopio Company Ltd Company No 16592	Respondent 9
Nobuko Investments Ltd Company No 371740	Respondent 10
Prudence International Ltd Company No 16156	Respondent 11
Wains International Company Ltd Company No 391025	Respondent 12
Moneycare International Ltd Company No 407450	Respondent 13
Chamomile International Ltd Company No 741159	Respondent 14
Highstone Investments Ltd Company No 112158B	Respondent 15
Sabre International Ltd Company No 6470	Respondent 16
Vantage International Management Group Inc. Company No 8403	Respondent 17
Union Trading Ltd Company No 15014	Respondent 18
Novelle Investment Partners Ltd (Bahamas) Company No 81563B	Respondent 19
United Resources Asset Management Inc SEC Reg No A200005310	Respondent 20
Allied European Holdings Ltd Company No 8313	Respondent 21

Any person or company who is a Respondent can obtain a copy of documents and affirmations in relation to the hearing from either Ma. Elmira A. Alconaba, Assistant Director, Compliance and Enforcement Department, Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, or Detective Senior Inspector David COPE, Financial Investigations Division, Hong Kong Police, 21st Floor, Arsenal House West Wing, Police Headquarters, Arsenal Street, Wan Chai, Hong Kong. HCMP 4221 of 2002 refers.

(PDI - Dec 15, 16 & 17, 2004)

olivetti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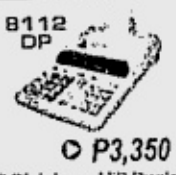
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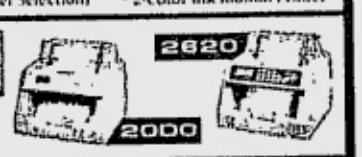
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GOLDSTAR HOME CORPORATION — Tan Building, Tomas Saco cor. 1st Street, Nazareth, Cagayan De Oro City — Tel. (088) 8570208 8575785 — Fax (088) 8575785

Door 2, Lua Bldg., Quirino Ave. cor. J.P. Laurel St., Davao City — Tel. (082) 2270321-23 — Fax (082) 2270321

DISCLOSURES

BANCO de Oro Universal Bank (BDO) disclosed that SMALLCAP World Fund Inc., a company incorporated in the United States, holds 26 million shares or 2.863 percent of BDO as of Dec. 9, 2004.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Prime Orion Philippines Inc.** were Felipe U. Yap, David C. Go, Micky Yong, Yuen Po Seng, Victor C. Say, Ricardo J. Romulo, Daisy L. Parker and Ricardo J. Romulo.

* * *

RIZAL Commercial Banking Corp. announced the promotion of Ana Luisa S. Lim as senior vice president of the bank.

* * *

EQUITABLE PCI Bank Inc.'s board of directors approved the promotion of Arsenio L. Severino as senior vice president.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Zeus Holdings Inc.** were Felipe U. Yap, Yuen Po Seng, Ronald P. Sugapong, Daisy Parker Ariel Lopez and Atty. Jesus Clint O. Aranas as independent director of the corporation for the year 2005.

* * *

ANSCOR Consolidated Corp. (ACC), a 100-percent owned subsidiary of A. Soriano Corp. (Anscor), bought 200,000 shares of Anscor last Dec. 14. ACC now has over 717.6 million shares of Anscor. *Compiled by Chona Galang, PDI Research*

ADB says fiscal . . .

From page B1

the bank said.

"By reversing the trajectory of revenue-less economic growth since 1997, the government can create fiscal space to unshackle itself from the compressed opportunities for discretionary spending in priority areas such as education, health, infrastructure, and asset maintenance," it explained.

The bank said greater domestic revenue mobilization to finance public expenditure would reduce the debt burden, interest payments on which were preempting a third of budget expenditure.

"The implementation pace and quality of measures taken for fiscal adjustment will be used by private investors and financial markets to gauge the government's willingness to address its profound challenge," it said.

"This, in turn, will determine their willingness to participate in the economic revival, a critical component of any strategy for moving more rapidly to a higher, sustainable growth path," the bank said.

The bank said this task demanded high-quality responses that would cause some economic pain, but concrete actions were urgently needed.

On the other hand, the ADB also noted that the unexpectedly high growth recorded in the first nine months of 2004 would result in full-year growth in excess of the 5.5 percent it earlier projected. It also expected such 5.5-percent growth in gross domestic product to be replicated next year.

The services sector is seen remaining as the lead sector with a growth of 5.5-6.3 percent, while the strong growth of the call center industry is also seen to continue, with some 250,000 new jobs created by 2009.

CAP's property-for-shares deal hits snag at securities commission

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PROPERTY-FOR-SHARES deal, which two firms have proposed to be able to buy into College Assurance Plan Philippines, Inc. has just hit a snag at the Securities and Exchange Commission.

SEC Director Benito Cataran said the commission has turned down the request for additional time which officials of the property firms said they needed to separate questionable titles and issue a separate title for the property-for-share swap.

In a Nov. 26 letter to Romeo Roxas, president of Green Square Properties Corp., Cataran explained that the department could also not grant the application before the titles for the swap are fixed.

Roxas, through Green Square Properties and Green Circle Properties and Resources, is proposing to subscribe to CAP shares worth P6 billion and pay for the shares by allotting parcels of land in Baler, Aurora near Dingalan Bay.

But some of the titles for the property, measuring 30.46 million square meters, are said to belong to the government.

Roxas then reportedly proposed to issue a separate title, free and clear of land claims under the Agrarian Reform program.

Roxas reportedly owns 30,000 hectares of land in the area.

CAP is presently working out the details of the proposed property swap and fixing the land titles.

Last Tuesday, the SEC allowed the pre-need giant to draw from its trust fund to pay its plan holders.

According to SEC chair Fe Barin, CAP could now draw P110 million from its cash deposit with Philippine Veterans Bank, but only in trickles.

CAP worked out a scheme to draw the amount in five tranches.

Barin said that while CAP would no longer be required to secure a formal approval from the SEC for the disbursement of each tranche, CAP would still have to notify the SEC where the cash would go.

To keep intact its trust fund at the Veterans Bank, CAP would substitute the amount to be drawn with bonds from the Metro Rail Transit.

A group of planholders demanding their tuition payments have threatened CAP officials.

CAP has about P160 million in liabilities this semester to various schools.

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1.0MM - 4,999,999	7.125	7.500	7.750	8.000
5.0MM - 9,999,999	7.250	7.750	8.000	8.250
10 million and up	7.500	8.250	8.250	8.500

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Firm confident of making good Masinloc bid

By Abigail L. Ho

YNN Pacific Consortium Inc., the winning bidder of the 600-megawatt (MW) Masinloc coal-fired power plant in Zambales, said it had enough financial muscle to make good its $561-million bid for the plant.

Reacting to speculations that the consortium might not be able to produce the $561 million it offered for the plant, Alfred Wong, chair of YNN Australian partner Great Pacific Financial Group, said the firm had deep pockets and is involved in various sectors, including financial services, property, hotels, infrastructure and mineral resources.

Great Pacific holds an interest in the Pacific International Hotel group, the fifth largest hotel chain in Australia. It also has hotels in Bangkok, Thailand and Shanghai, China.

In the power sector, Great Pacific has a stake in a small coal-fired power plant in China and a controlling interest in Australian listed firm Green Pacific Energy Ltd.

Great Pacific likewise has significant investments in coal mines located in the Wollongong and Hunter Valley regions of New South Wales, Australia. These two mines hold a total of more than 400 million tons of coal reserves.

The firm also has in its management team individuals who used to be involved in running some of Australia's largest coal-fired power plants.

While highlighting their financial and technical strengths, Wong said Great Pacific and the YNN consortium were relatively "low-profile" companies.

"We have money, but we leave it to the (Department of Energy to find out how financially capable we really are)," he said. "We are a low-profile company."

Great Pacific participated in the auction for the Masinloc plant in response to a suggestion from local partner YNN Holdings.

Before bidding, Wong said the consortium had already weighed the benefits of acquiring the plant of the National Power Corp.

Based on their assessment, he said the Masinloc plant was well worth every dollar they offered for it.

Veterans Bank seeks to merge with subsidiary

THE PHILIPPINE Veterans Bank (PVB) has filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) an application for its proposed merger with its subsidiary, Teachers Development Bank (TDB).

Veterans Bank owns 98.3 percent of TDB.

Based on its latest audited financial statements as of June 30, TDB has total assets of P94.3 million and capital worth P37.5 million. It operates two branches—one in Imus, Cavite and another in Naga City, Camarines Sur.

Veterans Bank, in a statement said that the merger was a move to consolidate its resources. In addition, this would enable PVB to better service its growing clientele from the private and government sectors.

The PVB's total assets stood at P16.09 billion as of Sept. 30. The bank reported a net income of P180.75 million for the first nine months of the year.

This showed an increase of 12.74 percent compared with the P160.72 million posted during the same period last year.

PVB's total capital accounts stood at P3.75 billion, resulting in a capital adequacy ratio of 36.74 percent, still above the floor required by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas at 10 percent.

PVB, a private commercial bank largely owned by World War II veterans, has 43 branches & extension offices nationwide.

It is owned by some 300,000 World War II veterans and their heirs. About 20 percent of its net profit is given yearly to projects and programs which benefits them and their families.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

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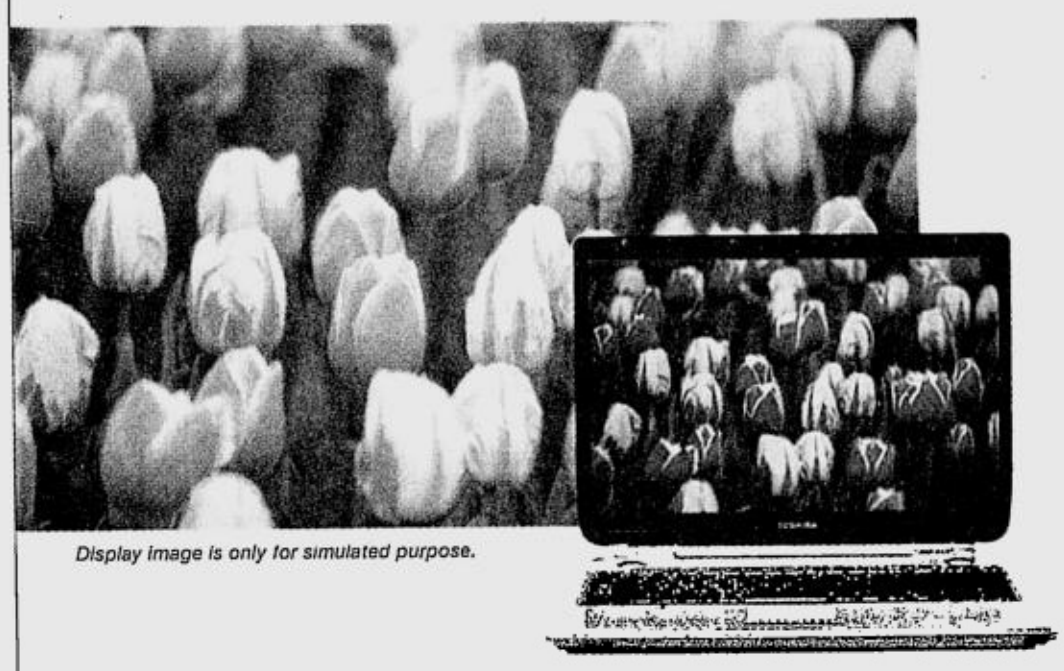

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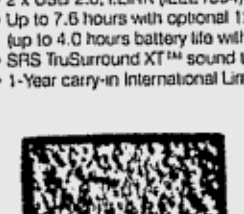

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3 firms keen on tapping oil reserves of Malampaya field

By Abigail L. Ho

THREE foreign firms have expressed "serious interest" in developing the oil reserves at the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project off northwest Palawan.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said Tuesday evening that the government had to find other ways of extracting the oil from the gas field following the decision of Malampaya consortium members Shell Philippines Exploration BV (Spex) and Chevron Texaco Philippines not to develop the oil reserves there.

However, he admitted that the government was still in talks with the consortium members even while it was considering other options.

"We're not going to wait for them. If they want (to develop the oil reserves), they better hurry. But if the consortium members are really not willing to develop (the oil reserves), then we'll have to bring in somebody else to do it," he told reporters at the sidelines of the launch of the updated Philippine Energy Plan.

Eduardo Mañalac, president and chief executive of 10-percent Malampaya shareholder Philippine National Oil Co.-Exploration Corp., said the three entities interested in developing the Malampaya oil reserves were all Asian and had no existing business in the country.

One of the firms, he said, came from a member-country of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Indonesia is the only Asian member of Opec.

He said crude oil should be drawn from the Malampaya gas find by the middle of next year.

The oil extraction efforts would be undertaken by a new consortium composed of PNOC and one of the three interested Asian firms, he said.

Spex and Chevron Texaco had earlier indicated their lack of interest in developing the oil reserves at the Malampaya gas find due to the relatively small oil yield as compared with their other offshore oil finds.

The Malampaya gas field is seen capable of yielding 25 million to 30 million barrels of crude.

While the multinational Malampaya consortium members might look at this yield as relatively small, Perez said it was important for the government to tap these oil reserves as it had a thrust of achieving 60-percent energy self-sufficiency by 2010.

To do this, some of the tasks that the government, in partnership with the private sector, had to accomplish was the development of indigenous energy resources and the discovery of "another Malampaya."

THE MALAMPAYA gas field is seen capable of yielding 25 million to 30 million barrels of crude.

NOTICE TO MANILA WATER CUSTOMERS AND THE PUBLIC
WATER TARIFF FOR THE EAST ZONE

Effective January 1, 2005, Manila Water Company, Inc. will implement the second tranche of the 2003 Rate Rebasing Adjustment as approved by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office in its Resolution No. 02-007 dated October 25, 2002 as confirmed by the MWSS Board Resolution No. 239-2002 dated December 13, 2002. Manila Water will carry out a 6.0% CPI Adjustment and a Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA) of 2.76% of Basic Charge as approved by the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office in its Resolution No. 04-016-CA dated December 9, 2004 as confirmed by the MWSS Board Resolution No. 2004 -313 dated December 10, 2004. The FCDA is computed quarterly depending on the fluctuations of the exchange rate.

Manila Water Company, the East Zone Concessionaire covers the following areas:

Manila (San Andres and Sta. Ana only); Quezon City (east of San Juan River, West Avenue, EDSA, Congressional and Mindanao Ave., Districts of Tandang Sora, Pasong Tamo and Matandang Balara), Makati City (east of South Super Highway), Mandaluyong City, San Juan, Marikina City, Pasig City, Pateros, Taguig, all in Metro Manila; Rizal Province.

MANILA WATER COMPANY, INC.
WATER TARIFF FOR THE EAST ZONE
Effective January 1, 2005

1. Water Charge (peso per cubic meter)

		Tariff Until 31 December 2004				Tariff Effective 1 January 2005			
		A. Basic	B. CERA*	C. FCDA (1.67% of Basic)	TOTAL	A. Basic	B. CERA*	C. FCDA (2.76% of Basic)	TOTAL
RESIDENTIAL									
First	10 cu.m.	34.96 /Conn.	*10.00 /Conn.	0.58 /Conn.	45.54 /Conn.	46.86 /Conn.	*10.00 /Conn.	1.29 /Conn.	58.17 /Conn.
Next	10 cu.m.	4.27 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.07 /Cu.m.	5.34 /Cu.m.	5.72 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.16 /Cu.m.	6.88 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	8.09 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.14 /Cu.m.	9.22 /Cu.m.	10.85 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.30 /Cu.m.	12.14 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	10.65 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.18 /Cu.m.	11.83 /Cu.m.	14.28 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.39 /Cu.m.	15.67 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	12.45 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.21 /Cu.m.	13.66 /Cu.m.	16.69 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.46 /Cu.m.	18.15 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	13.03 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.22 /Cu.m.	14.25 /Cu.m.	17.47 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.48 /Cu.m.	18.95 /Cu.m.
Next	50 cu.m.	13.62 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.23 /Cu.m.	14.84 /Cu.m.	18.26 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.50 /Cu.m.	19.76 /Cu.m.
Next	50 cu.m.	14.20 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.24 /Cu.m.	15.44 /Cu.m.	19.04 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.53 /Cu.m.	20.57 /Cu.m.
Over	200 cu.m.	14.78 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.25 /Cu.m.	16.03 /Cu.m.	19.82 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.55 /Cu.m.	21.37 /Cu.m.
SEMI-BUSINESS									
First	10 cu.m.	58.69 /Conn.	*10.00 /Conn.	0.98 /Conn.	69.67 /Conn.	78.69 /Conn.	*10.00 /Conn.	2.17 /Conn.	90.86 /Conn.
Next	10 cu.m.	7.14 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.12 /Cu.m.	8.26 /Cu.m.	9.68 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.26 /Cu.m.	10.84 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	8.81 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.15 /Cu.m.	9.95 /Cu.m.	11.81 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.33 /Cu.m.	13.14 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	11.19 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.19 /Cu.m.	12.38 /Cu.m.	15.00 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.41 /Cu.m.	16.42 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	13.03 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.22 /Cu.m.	14.25 /Cu.m.	17.47 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.48 /Cu.m.	18.95 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	13.62 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.23 /Cu.m.	14.84 /Cu.m.	18.26 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.50 /Cu.m.	19.76 /Cu.m.
Next	50 cu.m.	14.20 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.24 /Cu.m.	15.44 /Cu.m.	19.04 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.53 /Cu.m.	20.57 /Cu.m.
Next	50 cu.m.	14.78 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.25 /Cu.m.	16.03 /Cu.m.	19.82 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.55 /Cu.m.	21.37 /Cu.m.
Over	200 cu.m.	15.41 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.26 /Cu.m.	16.67 /Cu.m.	20.67 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.57 /Cu.m.	22.24 /Cu.m.
BUSINESS GROUP I									
First	10 cu.m.	158.89 /Conn.	*10.00 /Conn.	2.65 /Conn.	171.55 /Conn.	213.05 /Conn.	*10.00 /Conn.	5.86 /Conn.	228.93 /Conn.
Next	90 cu.m.	15.91 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.17 /Cu.m.	21.33 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.59 /Cu.m.	22.92 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	16.00 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.26 /Cu.m.	21.45 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.59 /Cu.m.	23.04 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	16.04 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.31 /Cu.m.	21.51 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.59 /Cu.m.	23.10 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	16.09 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.36 /Cu.m.	21.57 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.60 /Cu.m.	23.17 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	16.18 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.45 /Cu.m.	21.69 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.60 /Cu.m.	23.29 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	16.22 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.49 /Cu.m.	21.75 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.60 /Cu.m.	23.35 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	16.27 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.54 /Cu.m.	21.81 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.60 /Cu.m.	23.41 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	16.36 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.63 /Cu.m.	21.93 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.61 /Cu.m.	23.54 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	16.40 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.68 /Cu.m.	21.99 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.61 /Cu.m.	23.60 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	16.45 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.27 /Cu.m.	17.72 /Cu.m.	22.05 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.61 /Cu.m.	23.66 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	16.54 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.28 /Cu.m.	17.81 /Cu.m.	22.17 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.61 /Cu.m.	23.78 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	16.58 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.28 /Cu.m.	17.86 /Cu.m.	22.23 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.61 /Cu.m.	23.85 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	16.63 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.28 /Cu.m.	17.90 /Cu.m.	22.29 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.62 /Cu.m.	23.91 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	16.72 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.28 /Cu.m.	18.00 /Cu.m.	22.41 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.62 /Cu.m.	24.03 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	16.76 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.28 /Cu.m.	18.04 /Cu.m.	22.47 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.62 /Cu.m.	24.09 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	16.81 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.28 /Cu.m.	18.09 /Cu.m.	22.53 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.62 /Cu.m.	24.16 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	16.90 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.28 /Cu.m.	18.18 /Cu.m.	22.65 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.63 /Cu.m.	24.28 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	16.94 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.28 /Cu.m.	18.22 /Cu.m.	22.71 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.63 /Cu.m.	24.34 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	16.99 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.28 /Cu.m.	18.27 /Cu.m.	22.78 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.63 /Cu.m.	24.40 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.08 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.36 /Cu.m.	22.90 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.63 /Cu.m.	24.53 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.12 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.41 /Cu.m.	22.96 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.63 /Cu.m.	24.59 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.17 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.45 /Cu.m.	23.02 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.64 /Cu.m.	24.65 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.26 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.54 /Cu.m.	23.14 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.64 /Cu.m.	24.78 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.30 /Conn.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.59 /Cu.m.	23.20 /Conn.	1.00 /Conn.	0.64 /Conn.	24.84 /Conn.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.35 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.63 /Cu.m.	23.26 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.64 /Cu.m.	24.90 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.39 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.68 /Cu.m.	23.32 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.64 /Cu.m.	24.96 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.48 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.77 /Cu.m.	23.44 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.65 /Cu.m.	25.08 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.52 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.82 /Cu.m.	23.50 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.65 /Cu.m.	25.15 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.57 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.86 /Cu.m.	23.56 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.65 /Cu.m.	25.21 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.66 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.95 /Cu.m.	23.68 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.65 /Cu.m.	25.33 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	17.70 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.30 /Cu.m.	19.00 /Cu.m.	23.74 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.66 /Cu.m.	25.39 /Cu.m.
Over	10000 cu.m.	17.75 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.30 /Cu.m.	19.05 /Cu.m.	23.80 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.66 /Cu.m.	25.46 /Cu.m.
BUSINESS GROUP II									
First	10 cu.m.	171.92 /Conn.	*10.00 /Conn.	2.87 /Conn.	184.80 /Conn.	230.52 /Conn.	*10.00 /Conn.	6.36 /Conn.	246.89 /Conn.
Next	90 cu.m.	17.30 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.59 /Cu.m.	23.20 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.64 /Cu.m.	24.84 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	17.39 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.68 /Cu.m.	23.32 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.64 /Cu.m.	24.96 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	17.52 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.82 /Cu.m.	23.50 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.65 /Cu.m.	25.15 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	17.66 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.29 /Cu.m.	18.95 /Cu.m.	23.68 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.65 /Cu.m.	25.33 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	17.75 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.30 /Cu.m.	19.05 /Cu.m.	23.80 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.66 /Cu.m.	25.46 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	17.88 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.30 /Cu.m.	19.18 /Cu.m.	23.98 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.66 /Cu.m.	25.64 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	18.02 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.30 /Cu.m.	19.32 /Cu.m.	24.16 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.67 /Cu.m.	25.83 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	18.11 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.30 /Cu.m.	19.41 /Cu.m.	24.28 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.67 /Cu.m.	25.95 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	18.24 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.30 /Cu.m.	19.55 /Cu.m.	24.46 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.68 /Cu.m.	26.14 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	18.38 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.31 /Cu.m.	19.69 /Cu.m.	24.64 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.68 /Cu.m.	26.32 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	18.47 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.31 /Cu.m.	19.78 /Cu.m.	24.76 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.68 /Cu.m.	26.45 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	18.60 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.31 /Cu.m.	19.91 /Cu.m.	24.94 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.69 /Cu.m.	26.63 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	18.69 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.31 /Cu.m.	20.01 /Cu.m.	25.06 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.69 /Cu.m.	26.76 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	18.83 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.31 /Cu.m.	20.14 /Cu.m.	25.25 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.70 /Cu.m.	26.94 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	18.98 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.32 /Cu.m.	20.28 /Cu.m.	25.43 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.70 /Cu.m.	27.13 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	19.05 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.32 /Cu.m.	20.37 /Cu.m.	25.55 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.71 /Cu.m.	27.25 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	19.19 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.32 /Cu.m.	20.51 /Cu.m.	25.73 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.71 /Cu.m.	27.44 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	19.32 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.32 /Cu.m.	20.65 /Cu.m.	25.91 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.72 /Cu.m.	27.62 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	19.41 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.32 /Cu.m.	20.74 /Cu.m.	26.03 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.72 /Cu.m.	27.75 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	19.55 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.33 /Cu.m.	20.87 /Cu.m.	26.21 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.72 /Cu.m.	27.93 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	19.66 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.33 /Cu.m.	21.01 /Cu.m.	26.39 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.73 /Cu.m.	28.12 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	19.77 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.33 /Cu.m.	21.10 /Cu.m.	26.51 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.73 /Cu.m.	28.24 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	19.91 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.33 /Cu.m.	21.24 /Cu.m.	26.69 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.74 /Cu.m.	28.43 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	20.04 /Conn.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.33 /Cu.m.	21.38 /Cu.m.	26.87 /Conn.	1.00 /Conn.	0.74 /Conn.	28.61 /Conn.
Next	500 cu.m.	20.13 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.34 /Cu.m.	21.47 /Cu.m.	26.99 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.75 /Cu.m.	28.74 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	20.27 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.34 /Cu.m.	21.60 /Cu.m.	27.17 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.75 /Cu.m.	28.92 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	20.36 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.34 /Cu.m.	21.70 /Cu.m.	27.29 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.75 /Cu.m.	29.05 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	20.49 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.34 /Cu.m.	21.83 /Cu.m.	27.47 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.76 /Cu.m.	29.23 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	20.63 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.34 /Cu.m.	21.97 /Cu.m.	27.66 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.76 /Cu.m.	29.42 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	20.72 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.35 /Cu.m.	22.06 /Cu.m.	27.78 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.77 /Cu.m.	29.54 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	20.85 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.35 /Cu.m.	22.20 /Cu.m.	27.96 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.77 /Cu.m.	29.73 /Cu.m.
Over	1000 cu.m.	20.99 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.35 /Cu.m.	22.34 /Cu.m.	28.14 /Cu.m.	1.00 /Cu.m.	0.78 /Cu.m.	29.91 /Cu.m.

* Shall be subject to actual consumption of P1.00 per cubic meter if consumption is below ten (10) cubic meters.

2. A. Environmental Charge (EC)
10% of Water Charge

B. Sewerage Charge (SC)
50% of the Water Charge for all customers connected to the MWCI sewerlines

3. Maintenance Service Charge (MSC)

Meter Size	Amount Peso/Conn.)
1/2 or 13mm	1.50
3/4" or 20mm	2.00
1" or 25mm	3.00

Meter Size	Amount (Peso/conn.)
11/4" or 40mm	4.00
2" or 50mm	6.00
3" or 75mm	10.00

Meter Size	Amount (Peso/conn)
4" or 100 mm	20.00
6" or 150 mm	35.00
8" or 200 mm	50.00

4. Value Added Tax (VAT) 10% for the Charges 1, 2 and 3

The Monthly Bill is the sum of 1, 2, 3 and 4.

ANTONINO T. AQUINO
MWCI - President

Approved by:
ORLANDO C. HONDRADE
MWSS Administrator

EDUARDO C. SANTOS
MWSS-RO, Chief Regulator

For further inquiries you may visit the nearest Branch Office or call up Manila Water Company Hotline at 1627

Manila Water

Notice to its Customers

Effect of Umiray tunnel problem on Manila Water

- Even with 10% reduction in water supply due to the typhoon damage on the Umiray tunnel, Manila Water has maintained water supply to its customers as a result of P9 billion capital expenditure program and operating efficiency improvements in the distribution system.
- Manila Water is helping to ensure long-term water supply security by working closely with the MWSS to repair the tunnel and co-develop new water sources.

Water tariff rates to increase due to implementation of final staggered adjustment

- Manila Water will implement the second and last tranche of the Rate Rebasing adjustment approved by MWSS in 2002.
- The rate increase will be moderate at 2.31 pesos per day from the previous P7.77 per day for average residential customers consuming 30 cubic meters per month.

Manila Water's significant accomplishments

- Expanded and rehabilitated 700 kilometers of pipelines since 1997.
- Recovered nearly 350,000 cubic meters of water a day.
- Provided water service to more than 1.2 million people since privatization, 720,000 of which are from low-income communities.

Commitment to help more people by investing more

- Over the next 5 years, Manila Water will invest P19 B to construct and rehabilitate over 200 kilometers of pipeline per year.
- Further reduce water losses in order to provide more water to more people.

For further inquiries please call the Manila Water Company Hotline at 1627

Maynilad seeks P12B for capital expenditures

Concessionaire eyeing additional connections, improved network facilities in '05

By Christine A. Gaylican

MAYNILAD Water Services Inc. will need P12 billion for capital expenditure to boost operations over the next six years.

The beleaguered Lopez-owned water firm, which is now undergoing rehabilitation, would require an initial P1.16 billion next year.

Maynilad is the private concessionaire servicing the west zone of Metro Manila.

The firm may decide to source the amount from the proceeds of the new water rate increase to be imposed as early as January, said Fiorello Estuar, Maynilad president.

Maynilad officials hope to raise "the water volumes by 749 million liters per day next year" by focusing their effort to reduce "non-revenue water," Estuara added.

The rate adjustment, which on Jan. 1 will amount to P31.19 per cubic meter, will go to additional water service connections, improve network facilities and have a consistent water quality, he explained.

"We could not derive water from new sources, and what we could do now is to curb our non-revenue water (NRW)," that is currently at 72 percent, Estuar said.

He reported that efforts to repair NRW leaks in Tondo, Manila, alone for instance have resulted to a 41 million liters per day additional water for Maynilad customers.

"The public must know that efforts to improve our service is being done," he said.

Estuar, formerly head of the Public Works and Highways department during the Aquino administration, replaced Rafael Alunan III in February.

The financially ailing Maynilad, whose debts have amounted to P18 billion, is now undergoing rehabilitation and restructuring.

The designated receiver has until today to file the company's final version of the rehabilitation plan to be submitted for approval to Quezon City Regional Trial Court Branch 90.

"This is RTC Judge (Reynaldo) Daway's self-imposed deadline ... we believe this could still be breached and extended," said Estuar.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Regulatory Office hopes to increase Maynilad's water rate to P30.19 per cubic meter.

To ease the burden of consumers, MWSS officials hopes to implement the increase by installment beginning January.

MWSS Chief Regulator Eduardo Santos yesterday said during a public consultation that the staggered rate increase would be recommended to the company receiver led by lawyer Rosario Bernaldo.

IAS compliance seen to affect Meralco profits

By Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ-LED Manila Electric Co. will likely post a net income this year if not for adjustments that it will have to make to comply with provisions under the International Accounting Standards (IAS).

Meralco vice president and treasurer Rafael Andrada said in an interview Tuesday evening that the distribution utility would likely do better than last year's P907-million net income, but only if IAS-related adjustments would not be considered.

"There are early indications that we'll post a net income. We may even do better than last year, judging from our third-quarter results. But with the IAS adjustments, we may post a net loss," he said.

To comply with IAS provisions, he said Meralco would have to do some write-offs this year and in the coming quarters, which would adversely affect the company's bottomline.

Like all local firms, Meralco has to tailor its books to comply with IAS provisions.

Andrada explained that the IAS compliance procedure would be done in various stages. Like some firms that had to comply with the IAS, Meralco might book some of its write-offs in advance.

But these advanced bookings should not significantly affect the company's bottomline, he said, although IAS compliance would hurt its net income.

US mutual ...

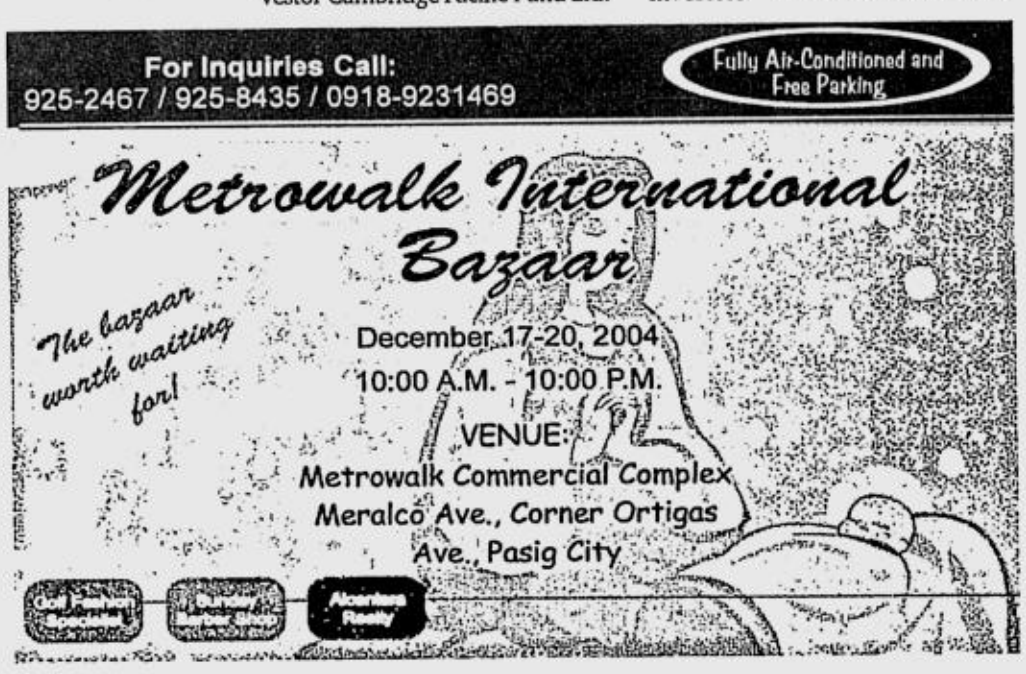
From page B1

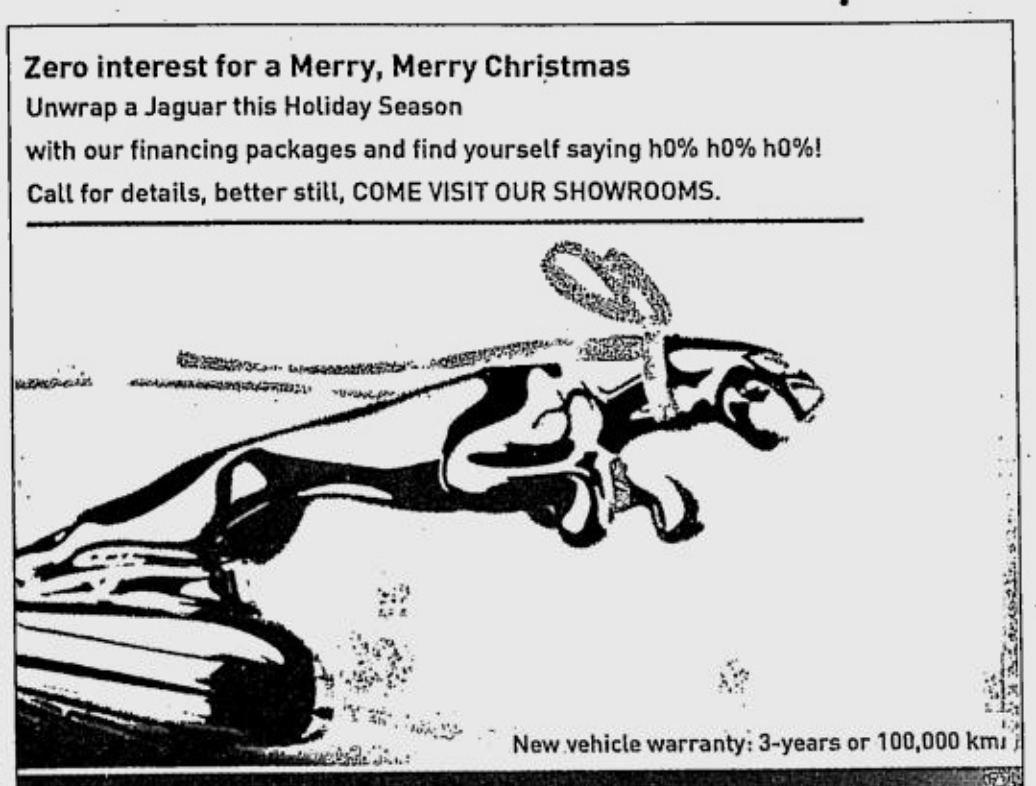
cent before the secondary sale of stock.

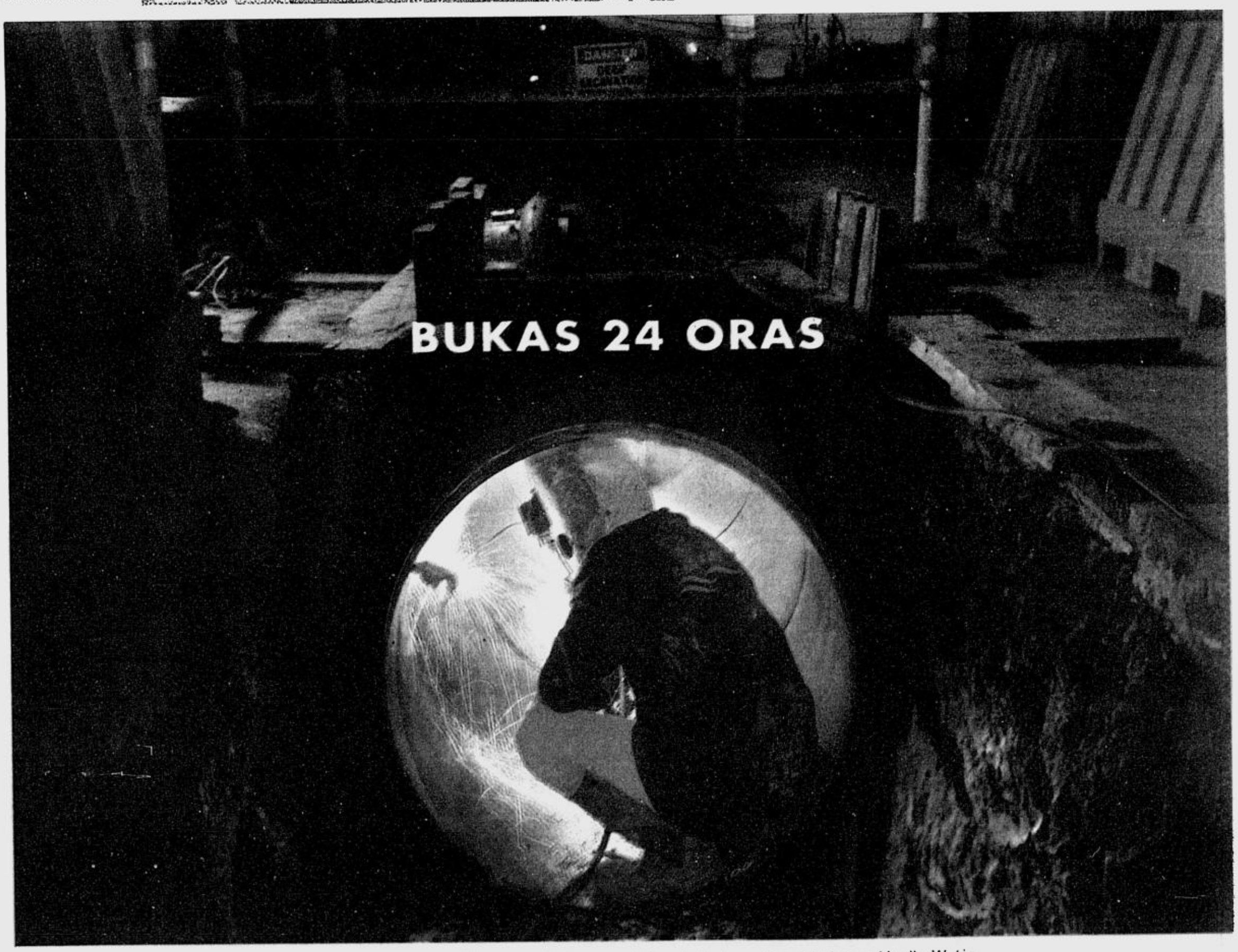
The plan also involved the setting up of a domestic holding company—Primebridge Holdings—which would be 60-percent owned by the SM group through SM Investments Corp., and 40 percent by existing minority foreign investor Cambridge Pacific Fund Ltd.

The transfer of the BDO shares held by foreign fund Cambridge into the holding company reduced direct foreign shareholdings in BDO from 32 percent to 18 percent.

The secondary offering allowed BDO to offer as much as 135 million shares held by existing shareholders to new foreign investors. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*







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PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE
INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

The assets are being offered on an "as-is, where-is" basis, at the Indicative Prices presented below. Sealed offers shall be received at 3:00 p.m. on the following schedules at PMO Conference Room, 6th Floor, Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Asset Name/ Location	Indicative Price (In Philippine Currency)	Date of Submission of Offers
Sanifoods Processing Corp. Land (19,974 sq.m.), buildings and other land improvements located at Brgy. Concepcion, Rosario, La Union	P9,933,900	January 17, 2005
Pioneer Glass Manufacturing Corp. Land (10.20 hectares) at No. 1275 ME General Trias Drive, Barangay Tejeros Convention, Rosario, Cavite	P154,449,000	January 18, 2005

The above assets are being offered at Indicative Prices payable within a maximum term of two (2) years.

Interested parties may secure the sale documents for non-refundable fees of P500 for Sanifoods and P1,000 for Pioneer Glass.

For more information, please contact the PMO Marketing Office at telephone nos. 817-6331; 817-8762; 818-4733; 892-2145 fax no. 818-0906.

(PDI - Dec. 15, 16 & 17, 2004)

DBP
Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines will receive sealed bids on December 21, 2004, 2:00 p.m., Suite 5, Executive Lounge, 12th floor, DBP Head Office, Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City for the property described below:

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	MINIMUM BID
BULACAN			
AM-PY-286	Along Cagayan Valley Road, Brgy. Tambubong, San Rafael	6 contiguous lots (TCT Nos. T-167376 to T-167381) total area of 45,997 m²	P 36,000,000.00

BIDDERS ARE REMINDED:

1. To inspect the property to determine its actual condition before the bidding;
2. To submit in DBP's official bid form available at AMD-Acquired Assets, 2nd Floor, DBP Head Office, Makati City; and
3. To be on time. No bids will be accepted once unsealing of the bids commences. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions which may be imposed by the Bank.

DBP RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, TO WAIVE ANY FORMALITY THEREIN, OR TO ACCEPT SUCH BIDS AS MAY BE CONSIDERED MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE BANK. THE DECISION OF THE BANK IS FINAL AND BINDING.

For inquiries, please call telephone numbers:
892-1566 / 893-7172 or 818-9511 local 2218 / 2252

ASSET MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

(PDI–December 15 & 16, 2004)

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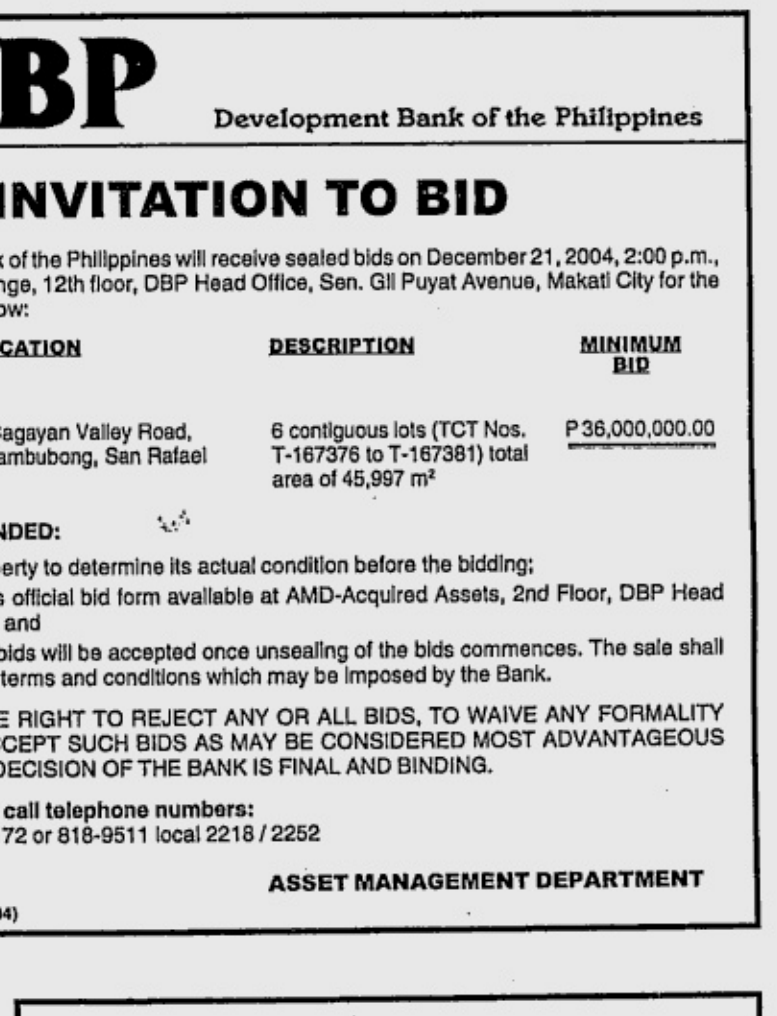
PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late LUIS & BELLA LAREZA has been extrajudicially settled among the heirs under Doc. No. 70, Page No. 15, Book No. 157, Series of 2004 in the Notarial Registry of Atty. Gerardo R. Flores, Mandaluyong City.
(PDI-Dec. 9, 16 & 23, 2004)



PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late ELIAS O. VERDADERO who died on July 11, 1990 at Piscataway, New Jersey, USA has been extrajudicially settled with partition and with Affidavit of Adjudication and waiver of right among his heirs per Doc. No. 009128 Series of 2004 under the seal of the Consulate General of the Philippines, New York, USA Ma Maria Lourdes C. Legaspi.
(PDI-Dec. 9, 16 & 23, 2004)

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

QC Sports Club Stock Cert under the name of JIM-MAR INC (Jimmy Lo Cham). If no contest received new cert will be issued. (PDI - Dec 2, 9 & 16, 2004)

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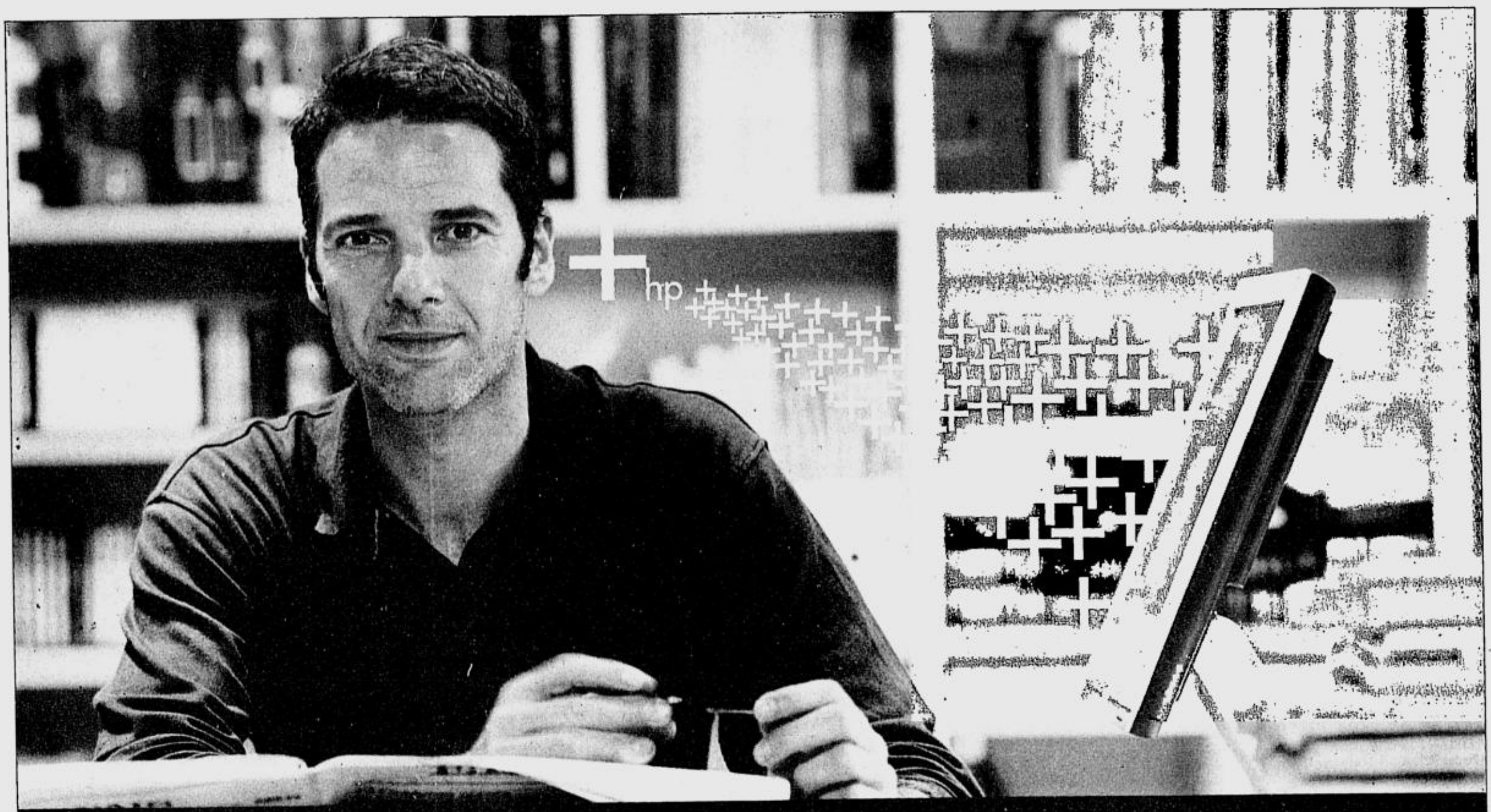

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- 512MB memory
- 10/100 LAN (Broadband ready)
- High Speed 56K modem
- One-year Limited Worldwide Warranty

^(2MB Cache, 1.70GHz, 400MHz FSB)

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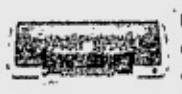

FREE HP Deskjet 3744 Colour Inkjet Printer for every unit purchased of HP Compaq Business Notebook nx9040 and for every 5 units purchased (one time purchase only) of the HP Compaq Business Desktop d220 Microtower or HP Compaq Business Desktop dx2000 Microtower.

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Promo runs from December 15, 2004 to January 15, 2005
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 3333 Series of 2004

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Go loopy over Hot Loops

A LINE-UP of tempting tastes and sweet surprises was unveiled to the public as Hot Loops Donuts opened its first dine-in shop last Dec. 12, at the annex of Robinsons Place Pioneer in Mandaluyong City.

Owned and operated by one of the largest Filipino conglomerates JG Summit Holdings Inc (JGSHI), Hot Loops Donuts brings to the fore an all-time favorite treat, created with superior taste and premium quality in mind, yet sold at a price that is easy on the pocket.

"We are continuing the JGSHI tradition of making premium products available to a greater number of people through affordability plus a wide distribution coverage," said Hot Loops general manager Bobby Go. "In a few months' time, people will have no difficulty finding Hot Loops Donuts in GMA." Shortly after its launch in Robinsons Pioneer, Hot Loops will open its second branch in Robinsons Galleria. Very soon, it will also make its goodies available in Robinsons Supermarkets and Big R outlets across the metropolis.

In taste and texture, Hot Loops creations are guaranteed to delight even the most discriminating food connoisseur. "Hot Loops donuts are made with a secret recipe that ensures superior quality and freshness," Go stated. For its dine-in shops, the donuts are baked in plain sight inside the store, offering customers a feast of sights and scents.

Moreover, these freshly-baked goodies come in an assortment of delectable flavors -- the classics, which include Choco-Lickety, Strawberry Good, Strawberry-Filled Forever and Bavarian Dream, are combined with novel, exciting varieties such as Peanut Better, Caramelt-in-your-Mouth, Choco Caramel Crunch, Choco-Nutty Rush, Original Sin (Apple Cinnamon), Cheesecake and Vanilla Crumble

"A lot of our new, original flavors are being offered - or will be offered -- to the Philippine market for the first time," said Go.

"Our array of flavors not only connote innovativeness, but also loads of fun for the whole family. This is likewise evident in our logo, our store's interior and our packaging, where we made use of animated, 'merriment' colors and designs," he added. Swathed in lively red, green and creamy yellow gold, embellished with hanging lamps as well as donut-shaped chairs, the Hot Loops shop is reflective of the brand's wholesome, fun, dynamic and rather avant-garde personality.

"There's a 'hole' lot of fun going on at Hot Loops," Go promised. "We invite all donut lovers to try all of Hot Loops' delicious flavors, concocted especially for the enjoyment of the Filipino palate."

ANCA'S OUTSTANDING TRAVEL BAG STORE FOR 2004

Since 1989, the Consumers Union of the Philippines has lauded exceptional corporations through the prestigious Annual National Consumers Awards (Anca). This year, among those who stood out in the service-oriented industry is Uniglobe Travelware Co Inc with their specialty store The Travel Club which was hailed as this year's Outstanding Travel Bag Store. Photo shows Travel Club representative Marisol Marcelo, UTCI sales and marketing director, flanked by CUP officials during the 15th Annual National Consumers Awards. From left: lawyer Quirino Marquinez, CUP president, Imelda Papin, CUP board of directors member, Lily Nicolas, CUP secretary general, Marisol Marcelo, Bishop Sonia Lim, CUP board member and Alex Flores, media practitioner and co-host of the show Boses ng Consumer.

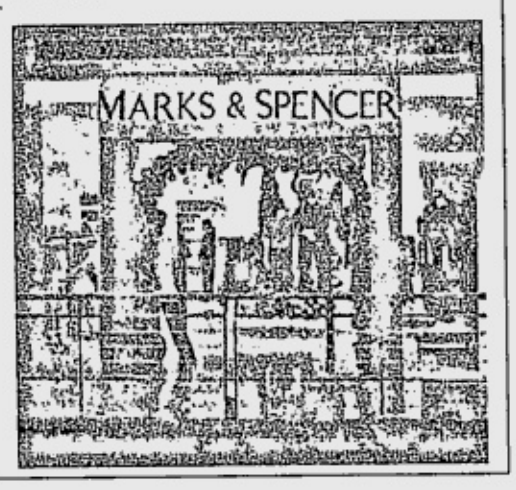
ADSIA EUROBAKERS JOINS 3RD INTERNATIONAL BAKERY FAIR

Adsia Eurobakers, supplier of yeast, bread improvers and milk blends, recently signed in with the Filipino Chinese Bakery Association Inc (FCBAI) for the forthcoming 3rd International Bakery Fair slated on Feb. 18 to 20, 2005 at the World Trade Center. Shown are (from left): FCBAI director Chua King Hua; FCBAI vice president Leonardo Ong; EVP Marvin Beduya of Adsia Eurobakers; FCBAI director and Bakery Fair 2005 committee chair Henry Ah; and FCBAI corporate secretary Marcos Ong Jr.

Product FILES

M&S at Gateway

MARKS & Spencer opened last Dec. 4 it's latest store in the new Gateway Mall at the Araneta Center. The new store features ladieswear, menswear, lingerie, toiletries and food.



Super X Series 2004

THE RED Horse Beer Super X Series 2004 National Extreme Sports Competition - National Finals kicks off at Gat. Andres Bonifacio Shrine, Taft Ave beside Manila City Hall on Dec. 16 to 18, from 9 a.m. onwards. Top 10 winners from Northern Luzon leg, Visayas and Mindanao leg and the Southern Luzon and NCR leg including the Top 10 athletes from last years Asian X Tour -Manila will compete to be crowned national champions in skateboarding, BMX stunts and aggressive inline. Top 3 athletes from seniors and juniors divisions will qualify for the Asian X Games in June 2005. For details and event information, call Urge Magazine at (632) 866-4418 or email at urge_mag@yahoo.com. This event is proudly organized by Urge Magazine.

AWIT NG PAG-ASA

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Byline Inquirer MGA ANGHEL SA LUPA

Sa Tanong ng Bayan BUWIS SA YOSI AT ALAK, DAPAT BANG TAASAN?

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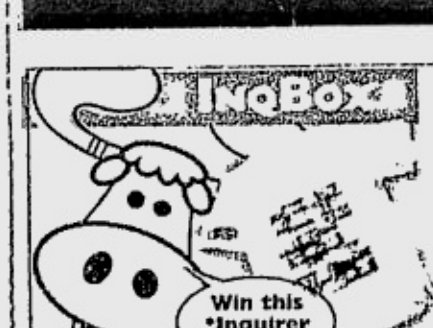
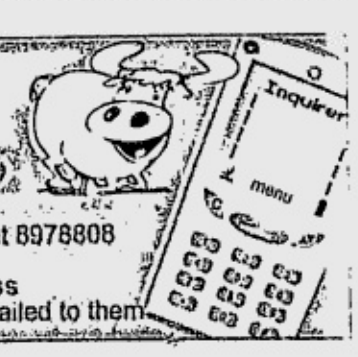
HOPE Globe intel



Question of the Week

The sudden death of FPJ makes me feel that life is _____ ..

Senders of d first 10 texts publishd in Tuesday's **INQBOX** *wil each receiv an "Inquirer T-shirt!*



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Hindi matatawaran ang naibigay niyang
inspirasyon sa napakaraming Pilipino.

Hinangaan hindi lang sa kanyang galing
kundi maging sa kanyang
mabuting pakikitungo sa kapwa.

Iginalang... Minahal...

Ang natatanging Da King.

Kakampi.

Kaibigan.

Kapamilya.

Hindi paalam...,
Kundi, maraming salamat.

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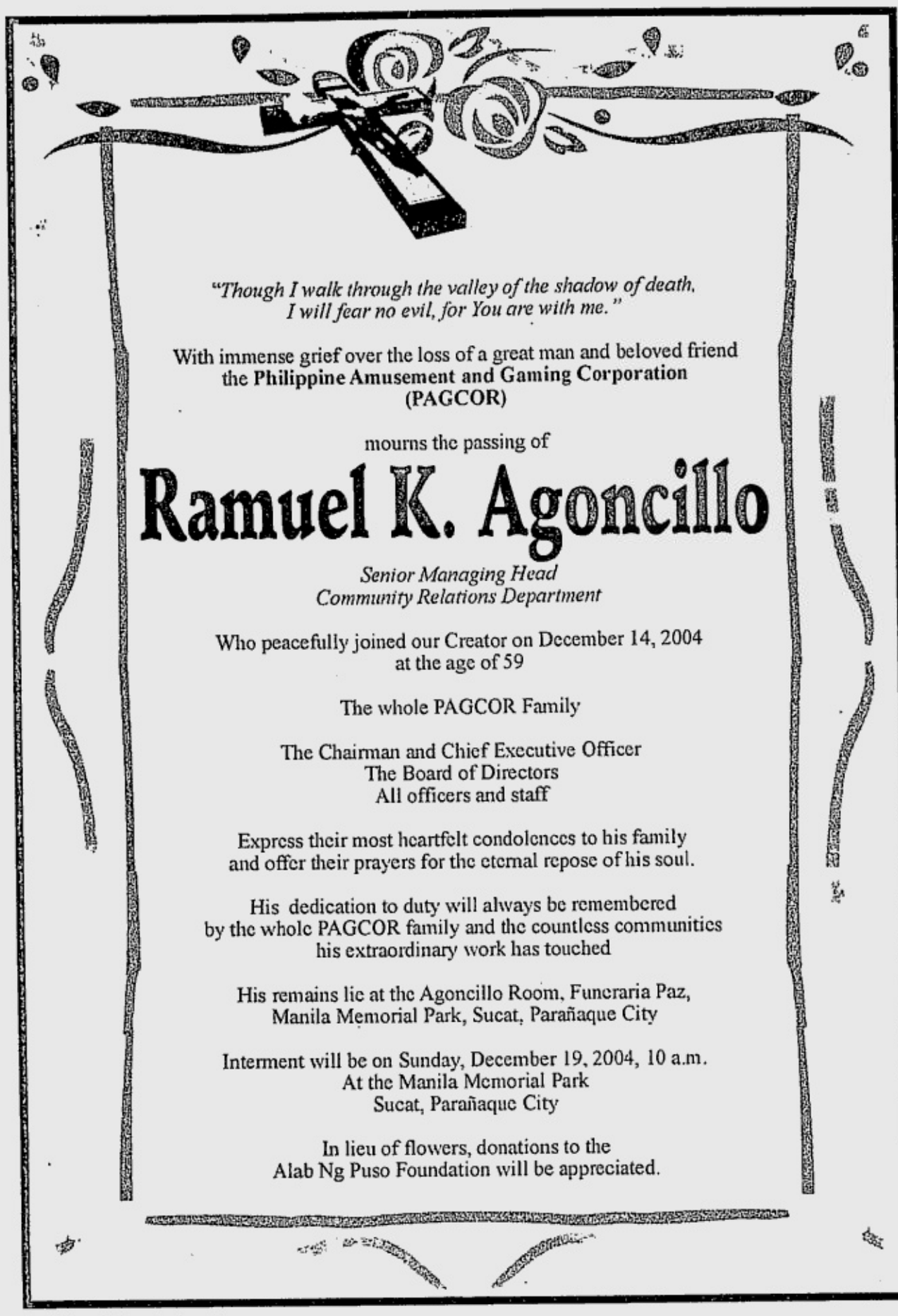

"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for You are with me."

With immense grief over the loss of a great man and beloved friend
the **Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation**
(PAGCOR)

mourns the passing of

Ramuel K. Agoncillo

Senior Managing Head
Community Relations Department

Who peacefully joined our Creator on December 14, 2004
at the age of 59

The whole PAGCOR Family

The Chairman and Chief Executive Officer
The Board of Directors
All officers and staff

Express their most heartfelt condolences to his family
and offer their prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His dedication to duty will always be remembered
by the whole PAGCOR family and the countless communities
his extraordinary work has touched

His remains lie at the Agoncillo Room, Funeraria Paz,
Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City

Interment will be on Sunday, December 19, 2004, 10 a.m.
At the Manila Memorial Park
Sucat, Parañaque City

In lieu of flowers, donations to the
Alab Ng Puso Foundation will be appreciated.

The Board of Directors,
Management and Staff of

Asia United Bank

condole with the family of

Atty. William T. Chua

Corporate Secretary

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord
on December 13, 2004 at the age of 49.

His remains lie in state at Capilla del Señor,
Sanctuario de San Antonio Parish,
Forbes Park, Makati City
and will be cremated on Saturday,
December 18, 2004 at 9:00 a.m.

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate; ❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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MALABED FUNERAL SERVICE
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Forbes Park, Makati City; Tel. Nos. 843-8838/30; Fax No. 843-9223
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East Greenhills, Mandaluyong City; Telefax 724-4139; 725-2044

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2141 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila; Tel. Nos. 254-0867, 254-0839
ST. MARK MEMORIAL CHAPEL
16-15 G. Tuazon cor. Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila; Tels. 749-3679; 781-1772
UNIVERSAL FUNERAL SERVICE & MEMORIAL CHAPELS
2028 Rizal Ave., Sta. Cruz, Manila; Tels. 493-4458; 493-4540
WELINGTON FUNERAL SERVICES
1511 Gen. Luna St., Paco, Manila; Tel. 302-5447

• MARIKINA
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26 Bayanbayan Ave., Concepcion I, Marikina City; Tels. 942-6044; 475-1177
F. SANTIAGO MEMORIAL HOMES
9 V. Gomez & 13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City; Tels. 646-1725 or 646-1730
LOYOLA MEMORIAL PARK CHAPELS & CREMATORY SERVICES
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13 V. Gomez St., San Roque, Marikina City; Tels. 646-1725; 646-1730

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Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat Rd., Sucat, Parañaque City; Tels. 825-1296; 825-1291, Telefax: 825-1314
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Dr. A. Santos Ave., Sucat, Parañaque; Tels. 820-1592; 825-9947; 825-8635
LINCOLN MEMORIAL SERVICES, INC.
Ground Floor, JEMP Bldg., J. Cabarrus cor. Monserrat Sts., Phase I, BF Commercial Center, Parañaque, Metro Manila
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LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.
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296 Quezon Ave., Quezon City; Tels. 372-5084; 410-9286/87

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Ground Flr. Rolling Hills Chapel, 27th-Lacson St., Mandalagan, Bacolod City; Tel. 433-7132

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79 Nagulilan Rd., Baguio City; Tel. (074) 443-3337; (074) 442-3117

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G. Tirona St., Imus, Cavite; Tels. (046) 471-3386; (046) 471-4417; (046) 571-1978

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Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu; Tels. 346-2543; 346-2601

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Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City; Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258

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#27 Crisologo St., Vigan, Ilocos Sur; Tel. 722-2730; Cell (0917) 5680136; (0917) 5680145

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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Finance
BUREAU OF CUSTOMS
Collection District II – B

MANILA INTERNATIONAL CONTAINER PORT

December 10, 2004

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 2601 to 2610 of the TCCP, as amended in relation to CMO 5-2003 dated March 17, 2003, and CMO 18-2003 dated 25 July 2003, there will be a Public Auction Sale through SEALED BIDDING, to be conducted by this Port on December 21, 2004, at 2:30 P.M, to be held at the 2nd Floor, MICP Building, North Harbor, Isla Puting Bato, Tondo, Manila, the herein described articles in lot. Said articles shall be available for viewing on December 20, 2004. In the event of a failed bidding, the second auction shall be conducted on the first business day following the first bidding.

Lot No. 085-04	WELCOME INT'L TRDING S.I. No. 04-012 1st Advertisement 'As Is Where Is' 'Proceeds held in trust.'	864 bags, 25 kgs./bag Monosodium Glutumate (Vetsin) Marks: Royal Dragon & Daichi Moto Note: 13 bags (B.O.)
Floor Price: Php1,580,697.40		Location: ICTSI CY, TGHU-2137094

Basic Guidelines:
1. File the duly accomplished Registration Form (name, address, TIN and other relevant circumstances to be indicated).
2. Php2,000.00 Registration Fee (Non-Refundable).
3. Php20,000.00 Cash Bond (Refundable).
4. Submission to the ACDD Proof of Qualification involving regulated commodities, such as rice (NFA License).
5. The highest bidder shall be required to pay 50% of the bid price either in cash and/or Manager's Check immediately and the balance of 50% shall be paid within the next business day.
6. After the second failed bidding, a particular lot may be offered to all qualified bidders for negotiated sale, subject to compliance of the requirements under Section IV – J of CMO 5-2003.
7. Payment by Cashier's/Manager's Check to the BOC/MICP shall bear the following:
   a. Pay to the order of Land Bank of the Philippines – BOC MICP E.O.
   b. For credit of the Bureau of Customs
   c. For the account of:

_____
Bidder

For further details, please contact Mr. Isidro A. Pre, Chief, Auction & Cargo Disposal Division, MICP, Tel. No. 247-09-77.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. FELIPE A. BARTOLOME, CESO V**
District Collector of Customs

(PDI – December 16, 2004)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Malaybalay City

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE
Provincial Governor's Office

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of the Province of Bukidnon, invites interested Suppliers, Distributors and Manufacturers to apply for eligibility and to bid on the following projects:

NAME OF PROJECTS	APPROVED BUDGET OF THE CONTRACT	SOURCE OF FUND
I. DRUGS & MEDICINES	P 30,066,976.35	General Fund & Capitation
II. MEDICAL AND LAB. SUPPLIES AND REAGENTS	P 8,829,410.90	General Fund & Capitation
III. MEDICAL AND LABORATORY EQUIPMENT	P 3,504,363.00	Trust Fund

This is for the use of Seven (7) Provincial Hospitals and twenty-two (22) Provincial Health Stations of the Province of Bukidnon. Immediate delivery or a maximum of fifteen (15) working days upon receipt of the purchase order is strictly required. Goods will be delivered at the Provincial General Services Office, Capitol Compound, Malaybalay City.

Schedule of activities are as follows:

1. December 20-29, 2004 – Issuance of eligibility requirements and bid documents (for accredited supplier)
2. December 21, 2004 – Pre-bid conference (BAC office)
3. January 3, 2005 – 9:00 a.m. Deadline for submission of Eligibility requirements
4. January 6, 2005 – 9:00 a.m. Deadline for the submission of bids
5. January 6, 2005 – 10:00 a.m. Opening of bids in sealed envelope

Only responsible and interested suppliers are qualified to participate upon presentation of the following:

1. Business Registration – DTI/SEC
2. VAT/BIR Tax clearance certificate
3. Mayor's permit
4. License to operate issued by BFAD
5. CPR/BFAD certificate for Product requiring certificate
6. Certificate of distributorship
7. List of products
8. Company's pharmacy license
9. Accomplished track record
10. Sworn statement of disclosure of relations
11. Supplier's audited financial statement
12. NFCC's computation or commitment from a licensed bank or cash deposit of at least equal to 10% of the ABC of the contract to bid.
13. Statement of prospective bidder that they are not Blacklisted or barred from bidding by the Gov't or any of its offices.
14. Special power of attorney issued by authorized company official with authority to transact business and sign in behalf of the owner.

Complete sets of eligibility requirements and bid documents may be obtained at the BAC Secretariat at the Provincial General Services Office, Province of Bukidnon, upon payment of non-refundable fee of P500.00/set. Duly accomplished eligibility requirements and bid documents shall be submitted in sealed envelope addressed to BAC chairman c/o BAC Secretariat.

The provision of R.A. 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations, shall govern all particulars relative to eligibility, bid bond, performance bond, pre-bid conference, bid evaluation and award of contract.

The BAC of the Province of Bukidnon reserves the right to accept or reject all bids thereof, to waive formality therein or to accept such bids or to award any work that is considered most advantageous to the Province of Bukidnon.

For any inquiry, please feel free to call the BAC secretariat at telephone number 088-813-25-37.

(Sgd.) **MR. JOSEFREDIE F. FLORES**
BAC Chairman/ Provincial Administrator

(PDI–Dec. 16 & 23, 2004)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Visit the SSS website for Bid Invitations

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

SSS CLUSTERED FIREWALL SYSTEM

The **SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM** is inviting bidders to apply for eligibility & to bid for the installation and customization of firewall with VPN and clustering solution, acquisition of two new hardware / appliance to serve as firewall, and replacement with buyback of existing Unix Server to serve as a management server.

This acquisition is intended to convert the existing SSS Firewall into a multi-homed highly available redundant firewall system dynamic load balancing, fault tolerant and transparent fail-over feature.

Approved Budget for the Contract:
- Item 1 – Hardware/Software – P7,000,000.00
- Item 2 – Three (3) Year Maintenance – P 4,200,000.00

Source of Fund:
- Item 1 – CY 2004 Approved Budget for Information System Security Requirements
- Item 2 – SSS Operating Expenditures

Delivery Schedule : Sixty (60) calendar days after signing of the contract

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

Particulars	Date	Venue
Issuance of eligibility requirements	December 16-29, 2004	BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.
Deadline of submission of eligibility requirements	January 06, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.
Issuance of Bidding Documents to Eligible Bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P5,000.00	January 10, 2005	BAC Secretariat, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.
Pre-bid Conference	January 13, 2005 2:00 p.m.	Bidding Room, 6th Floor, SSS Main Bldg.

Qualified bidders will undergo eligibility check, bid evaluation and post-qualification using Pass/Fail criteria. The contract shall be awarded to the bidder with the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bid.

For any inquiry, please call telephone numbers 922-2991 or 920-6401 local 5490/5491.

This bidding shall be governed by the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Act."

The SSS reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, to waive any formality or technicality, and to award to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the SSS. The SSS neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of their respective bids, nor does the SSS guarantee that an award will be made.

THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI - December 16, 2004)

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18-15 Escario Street, Cebu City
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NORA GONZAGA
Rm. 14 Danbeths Bldg.
286 Don Gil Garcia Extension
Capitol Site, Cebu City
Tel. No. (032) 259-3371

Dumaguete City
Mr. Raymund Mercado
Hi-Top News Magazine & General Merchandise
Dr. V. Locsin Street, Dumaguete City
Tel. Nos. (035) 225-5079/225-5796/ 422-7253/422-7822 Fax: 422-7253
Mr. Ramon Charles Sy
New Renie's
Dr. V. Locsin Street, Dumaguete City
Tel. Nos. (035) 225-4320/422-7452
Fax No. (035) 255-1182

Iloilo
Mr. Eduardo Ty
c/o Ms. Marilou Ty
Eddie-Mar News & Magazine Center
Ground Floor, Bombo Radio Building
Mapa Street, Iloilo City
Tel. No. (033) 337-3120/337-6018

Iloilo
Mr. Jim Feliciano
309 Ledesma Street, Iloilo City
Tel. No. (033) 336-9932
Cell. No. (0917) 401-9180

Kalibo
Dra. Bease Candelario
Candelario Enterprise
RB Newspapers, Magazine & Song Hits Distribution Agency
Pastrana Street, Kalibo, Aklan
Tel. Nos. (036) 262-4155/268-5200

Roxas City
Ms. Marieta Santos
M. Santos Komiks Magazines & Newspaper Dealer
Door C, MB Building
Fuentes Drive, Roxas City
Tel. Nos. (036) 621-5586/522-6925

Tacloban City
Mr. Neil Montejo
Montejo's Newspaper Supply
246 Avenida Veteranos
Tacloban City
Tel. Nos. (053)325-6743/321-2954

Tagbilaran City
Mr. Ferdinand Mercado
Doña Rosario Village
G. Penaflor Street
Tagbilaran City
Tel. No. (038) 411-5007

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Monday, January 31, 2005 (8:30 am- 5:30 pm)

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RATES PER SEAT:
- Super Value Rate: P1,999 Starting today; strictly until December 17, 2004 only
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Required No. of Participants	Discounted Rate/Seat	Regular Seating	Promo Duration
10	P1,699.00	P1,999.00	Until December 17, 2004
18	P1,799.00	P3,600.00	Until December 17, 2004

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OBITUARIES

Philippine Mortuary Association, Inc. anniversary celebration

THE Philippine Mortuary Association, Inc. cordially invites members and non-members to the Christmas celebration of the nation's mortuaries on its 20th anniversary to be held on Thursday, Dec. 16, 6 p.m. at Makati Park Garden, J.P. Rizal Extension, Brgy. West Rembo, Makati City, infront of Pamantasan ng Makati. Attire is semi-formal. For inquiries, contact Jose Dayao at tel. 7813705 and 7402683 or Benjie Dychangco at 09178904000 or Ben Restrivera at 8430756 or 8433574.

ATTY. RICARDO JAYME GEROCHI

Former Secretary to the Provincial Board, Province of Iloilo
of Pavia, Iloilo and Jaro, Iloilo City

Peacefully joined his Creator
on December 11, 2004
at 6:30 a.m. (Eastern Time)
at the age of 87 years.

His beloved wife **Concepcion Jamandre Pasquin Gerochi**; his children **Ricardo Jr., Renier, Roberto, Evelina, Romeo, Eleanor, Rolando** and **Rodolfo**, and their respective spouses, children and grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains will be interred at the Glendale Memorial Homes, Toronto, Canada, on December 18, 2004 at 11:30 a.m. (Eastern Time) after the 10:00 a.m. (Eastern Time) mass at the Church of the Nativity of our Lord in Etobicoke, Toronto, Canada

ATTY. MARIO O. LEYCO

(former IBP President Olongapo / Zambales Chapter,
Vice-Governor / Provincial Board Member of Zambales)

August 7, 1931 – December 13, 2004

His beloved wife **DORIS** (†); daughter **CECIL** & son **Nonoy**; sisters **NORMA** & **SONIA**; brothers **NESTOR, PULONG** & **CLARO** and in-laws **DEO, LUZ** & **ATO** (†) **CONTRERAS**; grandchildren **DIDAY** & **CHICOY**, relatives & friends request your prayers for his eternal repose.

His remains lie at the family residence in Poblacion, Iba, Zambales.

Cremation will be on Friday (December 17) at 4 p.m. Funeraria Paz, Araneta Ave., Quezon City.

Interment at Bangantalinga Chapel, Iba, Zambales
after the 8:00 a.m. Holy Mass
on Saturday (December 18, 2004).

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die.
God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."
2 Corinthians 5:4-5

BUSINESS

PTT rolls back gasoline, diesel prices

TARIFF rise seen to counter softening of oil prices.

By Abigail L. Ho

INDEPENDENT oil firm PTT Philippines Corp. yesterday rolled back its pump prices of gasoline and diesel by 50 centavos per liter.

Other oil companies are expected to cut their prices this week or early next week.

The Department of Energy is convinced price reductions are possible in the next several days, as world prices of crude and refined petroleum products continue to soften.

"Current world market prices are much lower now than they were in October. Because of this, we can expect a reduction in pump prices this week or next," Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said during the launch of the updated Philippine Energy Plan Tuesday evening.

Data from the DOE showed that the benchmark Dubai crude fell to an average of $33.55 a barrel in the first 13 days of December from $34.87 a barrel in November.

The price of unleaded gasoline, based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS), also declined to a month-to-date average of $45.82 a barrel, significantly lower than the $52.44 a barrel posted last month.

The price of MOPS-based diesel also dropped to $50.92 a barrel in the first 13 days of the month, shedding almost $6 a barrel from last month's average of $56.02 a barrel.

Perez said the recent announcement of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (Opec) plan to cut production by one million barrels per day starting Jan. 1, 2005 did little to reverse the downtrend.

Prices of crude and petroleum products continued to go down despite the Opec announcement and the other factors that affected world market prices.

But Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association chair Fernando Martinez said current pump prices were not even reflective of the successive international price increases in the past several months.

As this was the case, he said the likelihood of a rollback was very slim.

Oil firms might not even be able to sustain the current pump prices of the socially sensitive diesel, particularly if global demand would spike in January, he said.

"If world market prices in January will be higher than those in December, we don't know how we'll be able to maintain (current pump prices), especially of diesel. The increase in tariff will also be in effect by Jan. 1, 2005," he told the INQUIRER.

The tariff imposed on imported crude and refined petroleum products will go up to 5 percent from the current 3 percent by virtue of an executive order issued in July and a DOE circular issued last month.

Bank lending up 3.6% to ₱1.5T in Oct.

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOANS extended by commercial banks in October hit P1.5 trillion, or 3.6 percent higher than year-ago level, mainly due to increased lending to the manufacturing sector, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

It was the eighth straight month that commercial banks posted positive loan growth. The rate of growth, however, was deemed by the BSP as too slow to contribute significantly to the economy.

"The modest growth in bank lending highlights the need to further improve the health of the banking system to support sustained economic growth," the BSP said.

The year-on-year loan growth in October stood higher than the 1.9 percent growth in the previous month and the 0.8 percent rise posted in October 2003.

On a month-on-month basis, however, total lending dipped by 1.1 percent in October 2004, worse than the 0.7 percent decline in the previous month.

The annual growth in bank loans was fueled by the 17.9-percent rise in loans to the manufacturing sector in October, compared to year-ago level.

Other sectors that contributed to the increase in total commercial bank loans were: electricity, gas and water which grew by 11.1 percent; agriculture, fisheries and forestry, 9.7 percent; community, social and personal services, 4.7 percent, and, wholesale and retail trade, 4.0 percent. These increases, however, were offset partly by the contraction in outstanding loans to the other sectors, particularly to the construction industry which fell by 17.9 percent from year-ago level.

There was, likewise, a slowdown in the loan extension to the following sectors: mining and quarrying (11.3 percent); financial institution, real estate and business services (8.1 percent); and, community, social and personal services (8.2 percent).

The BSP said demand conditions would support a continued improvement in bank lending in the months ahead, especially since the country's real gross domestic product grew by 6.3 percent in the third quarter of 2004 on strong agriculture, industry and services output as well as robust exports and personal consumption spending.

Weak performance of LGUs blamed for proverty in RP

By Michelle V. Remo

THE WORLD Bank said the weak performance of local government units—particularly in the areas of governance, delivery of services and revenue generation—was the main reason for poverty in the country as it had hampered development efforts.

World Bank country director Joachim von Amsberg said addressing capacity-related problems of LGUs should be at the forefront of the government's poverty alleviation agenda.

Amsberg noted that a number of LGUs were still financially dependent on the national government, which was already heavily burdened by its own fiscal woes.

"Still quite a number of LGUs seem to be falling short of expectations and their potential, and are not taking full responsibility for devolved services," Amsberg said in a speech, which was read by a representative during the Monday assembly of members of the League of Cities of the Philippines.

The national government has already devolved social services that are local in nature, such as education and community healthcare, to LGUs. Many of them, however, still depend on the national government for funds because they cannot not fully shoulder the cost of such services.

The World Bank official stressed the need to strengthen the financing system of LGUs, suggesting that they should mobilize their own revenue sources to become less dependent on the national government.

"A big number of LGUs still shy from borrowing to finance their programs. The low demand for loans is a result of low LGU revenue base, presence of unregulated grants (including pork barrels), (and) lack of capacity to develop bankable projects ...," the World Bank official said.

In view of this, Amsberg urged the national government to make the Municipal Finance Corp. (MFC) fully operational to partly address financing-related problems of LGUs. MFC, an agency under the Department of Finance, is tasked to provide credit access to LGUs to finance basic social services and other development projects.

Corn supply seen to tighten in Q1

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE COUNTRY is expected to experience a tight corn supply situation in the first quarter of year 2005 due to the damages inflicted by the four typhoons that hit the northern part of the country and the drought in the south, said Philippine Maize Federation Inc. (Philmaize).

The typhoons damaged some 70,000 hectares of corn farms or 250,000 metric tons of corn.

Philmaize chair Rod Bioco said that more than 50,000 hectares of corn farms in the province of Isabela, a major corn producer, were destroyed by Typhoon "Yoyong." While in Bukidnon, some 20,000 hectares of corn were also damaged.

Expectations of a tight supply situation have already propped up farmgate prices of the grain. Corn prices range at P8 to P9 per kilo.

"The 50-centavo average increase in the farmgate price is an encouraging development to corn farmers, who are burdened by the rising cost of fertilizers," said Blanco.

The country's corn importation is expected to decline by as much as 50 percent as livestock raisers cut down on production due to the increasing prices of feeds.

SLEX widening starts

By Ronnel W. Domingo

PRELIMINARY work on the widening of South Luzon Expressway started last week even before the evaluation of the bids for the contract was completed, said the Philippine National Construction Corp.

PNCC chair Pastor R. Ramos Jr. said in an interview that PNCC had started preparations for the construction of an additional lane on each side of SLEX.

The additional lanes would eat up part of the center portion of the SLEX, which separates the northbound lanes from the southbound lanes.

Ramos, who is also PNCC's acting president and chief executive, added that a bid committee was now studying technical proposals for the P10-billion project, which also covers the rehabilitation of the Alabang viaduct.

"The schedule for the opening of the second envelope or the financial proposal would depend on when the committee would finish the evaluation of the technical proposals," the official said.

Ramos said PNCC was open to the participation of Hopewell Crown Infrastructure Inc.—its partner in the South Luzon Tollways Corp.—in the project but it should first show that it had the financial resources to do so.

It was reported earlier that 10 construction firms had expressed interest in bidding for the SLEX project. These included FF Cruz, Cavite Ideal, EC de Luna Construction Corp., J Pajara Construction Corp., Ciriaco Corp., China State Engineering Corp., William Uy Construction Corp., Dimson Manila, RV Policarpio and Co., CM Pancho Construction.

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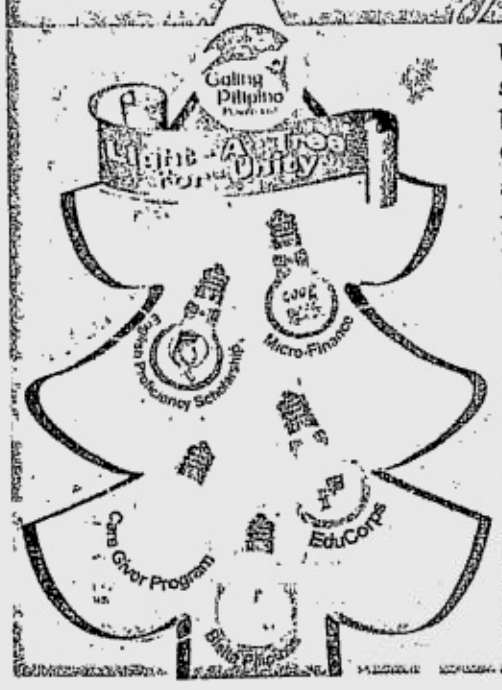
Making Christmas Make a Difference



UNIQUE and heartwarming Galing Pilipino traditions support the claim that the Philippines could very well be the "Christmas capital of the world". After all, Christmas is celebrated for the longest period here and is marked by the biggest gift giving and shopping per capita, despite the poverty incidence. To blazon this spirit of generosity, the Galing Pilipino Movement (GPM) will spearhead this celebration through three (3) trailblazing activities:

• Light-a-Tree-for-Unity: a special fund-raising drive for the benefit of nation-building causes using giant 20-foot Christmas trees and colored light bulbs as the medium of donation. The main PGP Trees display will be at the Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz Park in Luneta.

• Fund-raising for Other Causes: tree sponsors donate P150,000 while bulb donations are at P150 each. This fund drive empowers the donors to choose the cause they want to support. GPM does not earn from this activity. Proceeds from the donated trees and bulbs will be earmarked for five nation-building causes that promote admirable Pilipino values such as world-renowned hospitality, industriousness, competence, compassion, and volunteerism.

• Pamaskong Alay sa Mundo, Galing sa Pilipino : The First Lighting of PGP trees take place on Dec 16, 2004. Opening with a mini-concert at 6 p.m., Pilipinos here and abroad will unite in singing "Pasko Na Naman" at 7 p.m. Manila time. A prayer for the nation and for world peace will be said after that Christmas serenade to the world.

A showcase of the *bayanihan* spirit, which started in December 2003, GPM intends to make it better this year, with its GPM youth arm in the forefront of a dynamic effort in rebuilding this nation. Due to the earnest desire of GPM members and supporters in Cebu, Davao and Butuan to participate in this noble undertaking, similar PGP trees will be likely on display in these areas with simultaneous First Lighting program done in similar *bayanihan* style of celebration.

PAMASKONG GALING PILIPINO 2004
Light-a-Tree for Unity
Opening Night
December 16, 2004, Thursday, 6PM
Blessed San Lorenzo Ruiz Park, Luneta

PROGRAMME

Doxology by the Marikina Dance Guild
Pambansang Awit by VSE Productions of Bulacan
Opening Message by GPM President Erly de Guzman
Performance by the UP Manila Chorale
PASKO NA NAMAN
Presentation of Pamaskong Galing Pilipino Causes
Performance by the Masterpiece Choir
Lighting of Pamaskong Galing Pilipino Trees
With the Special Participation of
Illac Diaz & Chin Chin Gutierrez
Fireworks Display
Finale

Bayanihan Picnic at the Park follows. Bring sparklers to light up as we sing.

SMART salutes the Amazing Filipino!

Like Manny Pacquiao, our boxing hero, SMART sees the potential in all of us – in our own way we can be heroes, too.
SMART invites you to support the Galing Pilipino Movement and their unique fundraiser called Pamaskong Galing Pilipino 2004.

To promote your chosen cause text <ur chosen color> and send to 2456. Please use the list below to guide you.

Caregiver Program for the Abandoned and the Elderly

Red to promote Competence
English Proficiency Scholarship for Public School Students and Teachers

Green to promote Industriousness
Micro-Finance Fund for Community-based enterprises

Blue to promote Volunteerism
EduCorps: Logistical Support Fund for Volunteer Teachers and Community Workers

Bisita Pilipinas, an eco-agro tourism-based community enterprise, creating a bed & breakfast trade to highlight what is unique and excellent in chosen Filipino communities

Galing Pilipino Movement

I ♥ SMART Simply Amazing!

To subscribe to inspiring Filipino stories, text GP ON to 2456.
To download a Christmas ringtone, text GP PASKO to 2456.

For SMART Infinity, SMART Gold, Addict Mobile, and SMART Buddy subscribers: Handset themes cost P30.00 each. Ringtones and polytones cost P15.00 each. Text messages cost P2.50 each. Info on demand for all except Addict Mobile at P10.00; Addict Mobile's at P5.00.

For questions, comments, or concerns, you may call the SMART Hotline at 888-1111; *888 using your SMART cellfone; the SMART Corporate Hotline at #888; send a text message to 888 (Standard rate in excess of the FREE TEXT allocation applies); e-mail us at customercare@smart.com.ph, visit our website at www.smart.com.ph, or visit the SMART Wireless Center nearest you.

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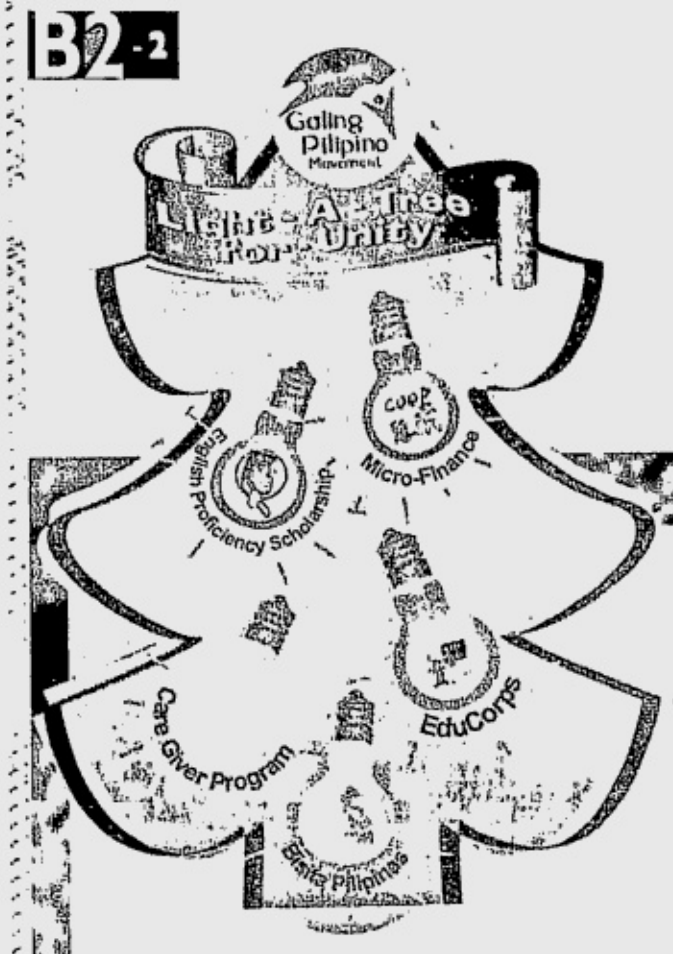

Galing Pilipin

The Galing Pilipino Movement is a non-profit organization that aims to recognize, affirm and propagate what is good and excellent about being Pilipino.

Fired up from the recent Galing Pilipino Young Leaders Camp, the youth of our nation are raring to build their future by mobilizing resources to re-build the lives of the needy through Pamaskong Galing Pilipino 2004.

Presenting Light-a-Tree-for-Unity. A special fund raising drive for the benefit of nation-building causes.

BIGYANG LIWANAG ANG KANILANG MUNDO

At the Blessed San Lorenzo Ruiz Park in Luneta, special 20' Christmas trees will be displayed from Dec. 16, 2004 to Jan. 2, 2005. Companies or individuals can either sponsor a tree for P150,000 or donate a bulb for P150. Proceeds will be given to the causes that donors expressly choose to support.

- **Yellow** - Bisita Pilipinas: Eco-Agro Tourism-based Community Development
- **Red** - English Proficiency Scholarships for Public School Teachers and Students
- **Green** - Micro-Finance Fund for Local Community Micro-Enterprises
- **Blue** - EduCorps: Logistical Support Fund for Volunteer Teachers and Community Workers who will lead the Bisita Pilipinas program
- **White** - Care-Giver Giver Centers that will develop Local Nursing Homes for the Abandoned and the Elderly.

SAMA-SAMA NATIN GAWING MAKULAY ITONG PASKO!

The lighting of the trees will truly be an enriching celebration that will bring together Pilipinos here and abroad. On Dec. 16, 2004 at 7 p.m. Manila time, the ceremonial first lighting of these trees will be done as all participants unite in singing *"Pasko Na Naman"* and in saying a prayer for peace and goodwill.

Light a tree for unity. Light a bulb for a worthy cause.
Light up the future of the Young. Make your Christmas make a difference!

BE PART OF PAMASKONG GALING PILIPINO 2004.

GPM Event Sponsors

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DD: Philippines
DOT National Parks and Development Committee
MERALCO

...io, Nagniningning

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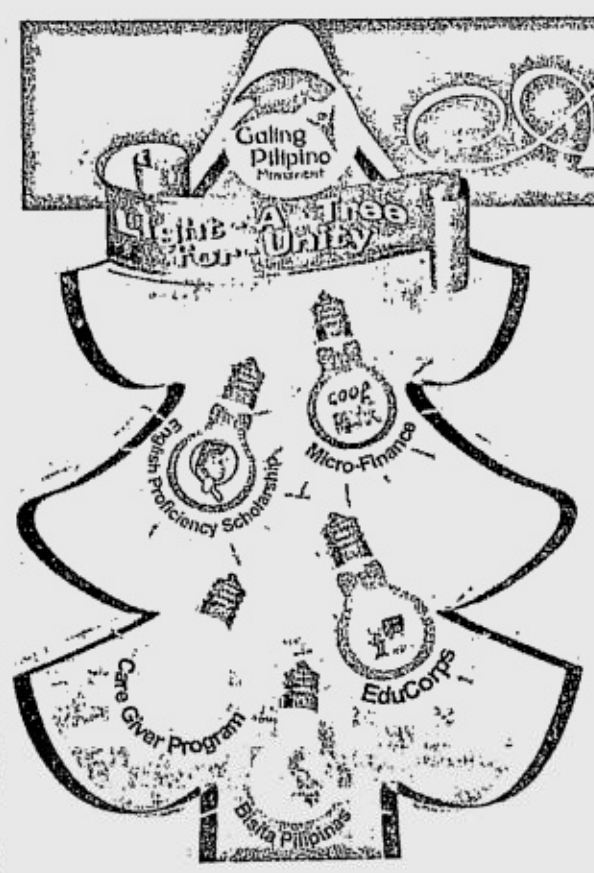
A Bayanihan Christmas



THE JOY of giving never fails to radiate from Pilipino hearts at Christmas time, despite economic hardship, political strife and debilitating calamities that beset us in the past. The recent typhoons evoke once again that noble giving character of the Pilipino evidenced by the proliferation of flood relief drives and mercy missions. In like spirit, the Galing Pilipino Movement (GPM) takes on the challenge of making Christmas 2004 a meaningful celebration that will contribute to actually re-building our nation.

Accenting our unique and heartwarming traditions constitute Pamaskong Pilipino. Addressing the challenge of the times by drawing out and drawing from what is good and excellent in Pilipinos is what Pamaskong Galing Pilipino (PGP) is all about. PGP 2004 invites Pilipinos to contribute to nation-building by participation and donation. Twenty-foot Christmas trees and colored light bulbs serve as the medium of donation. Attendance in key events, promotional networking and volunteer service are the avenues of participation.

The Galing Pilipino Movement (GPM) formally launches the Pamaskong Galing Pilipino 2004 today, Dec. 16—the first day of our traditional Simbang Gabi. The Light-a-Tree-for-Unity project is a GPM-led fund raising drive that will mobilize resources to benefit five nation-building causes that highlight strong Pilipino values, as follows: (Their Bulb Color, Pilipino Values and Proposed Cause)

YELLOW - Hospitality - Bisita Pilipinas: an eco-agro tourism-based community enterprise that will spur a bed-and-breakfast homestay program, exhibiting what is unique and excellent in the locale

RED - Competence - English Proficiency Scholarships for Public School Teachers and Students

GREEN - Industriousness - Micro-Finance Fund for Community-based Enterprises that will support the Bisita Pilipinas program in the locale

BLUE - Volunteerism - Logistical Support Fund for EduCorps, Volunteer GPM Members who will serve Teachers and Community Workers

WHITE - Compassion - Care Giver Centers or Nursing Homes for the Elderly and Abandoned Kids

Sponsorship of 20-foot Christmas trees are at P150,000 whereas colored light bulbs are at P150 each. There are approximately 250-300 bulbs per tree. These PGP trees will be on display at the Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz Park in Luneta from Dec. 16, 2004 to Jan. 2, 2005.

The First Lighting of the Trees will happen at 7 p.m. Manila Time on Dec. 16. This special event will be enhanced by the singing of the OPM carol, "Pasko Na Naman by Pilipinos" here and abroad as our Pamaskong Alay sa Mundo, Galing sa Pilipino. GPM envisions Pilipinos united in prayer and praise for the nation and for world peace at this "sacred" time. This ceremony will take place simultaneously in different participating areas including Cebu, Davao and Butuan in the Philippines.

The *bayanihan* spirit permeates this project undertaking. The Luneta venue is courtesy of the National Parks Development Committee of the DOT. Meralco provides the electricity for the Christmas trees. The Plaza at the Penthouse Tektite Tower hosted the Launch Press Conference. DDB Philippines prepared the theme ads and supplement design. At the opening ceremony on Dec. 16, the Advertising Suppliers Association of the Philippines (Asap) developed the program, with Sellco providing the staging, lights and sounds. Kamayan will provide barbecue for guests. Scan Livingston Graphics created the signages. Gobo provides cyber lights. Major sponsors include Chowking, SMART, and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, which supported this supplement.

Pamaskong Galing Pilipino 2004 principally aims to harness goodwill and direct media focus to the more positive and constructive side of nation-building. This meaningful coming together of a different kind of Christmas celebration could very well be a defining moment that will rally Pilipinos, here and abroad, to strengthen the *bayanihan* spirit that will enable our country to face the challenges of 2005 with faith and conviction. The coming year will see GPM in dynamic collaboration with other social development organizations who are actively involved in these causes and in implementing these programs in key areas nationwide.

Deposit your donations at any Union Bank branch.

GPM Foundation Inc,

CA 00-001-008201-3.

For other details, call 633 1089; 631 3932; text 0919-3792466 / 0917 835 4829; email galing.phils@pacific.net.ph or log on to http://www.galingpilipino.com.

Pasiklabin natin ang Galing ng Pilipino ngayong Pasko!

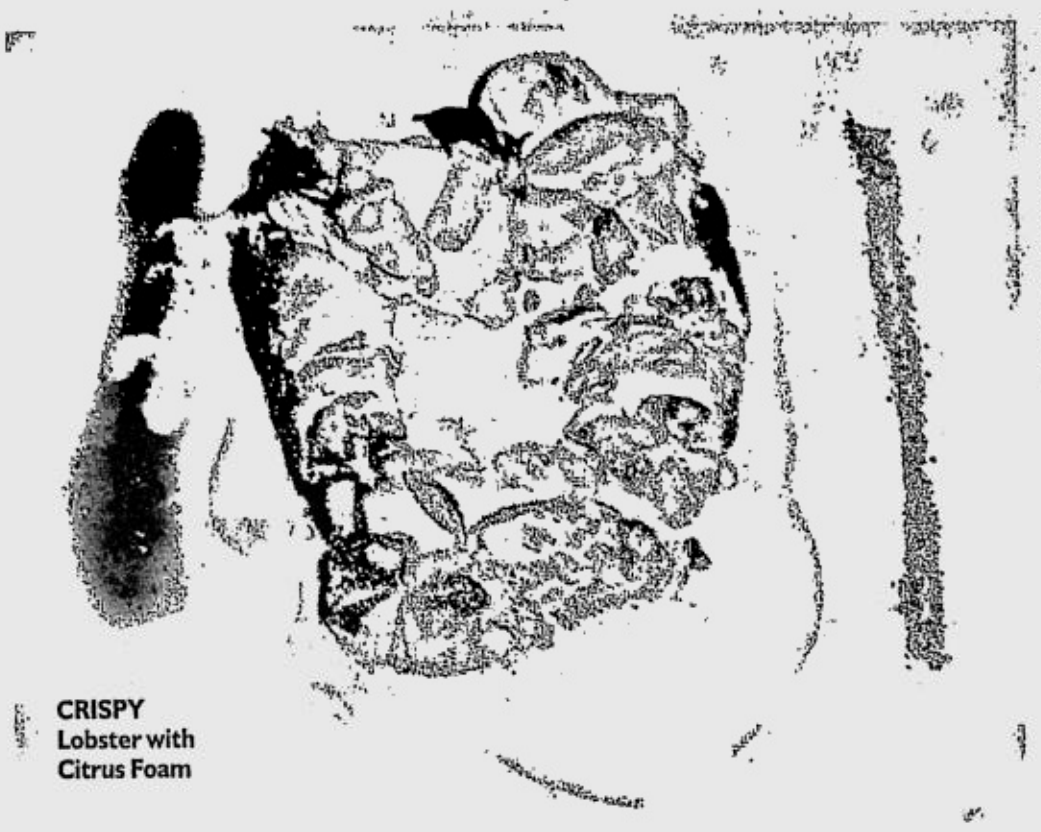
Text to Donate!

Support the Pamaskong Galing Pilipino causes:

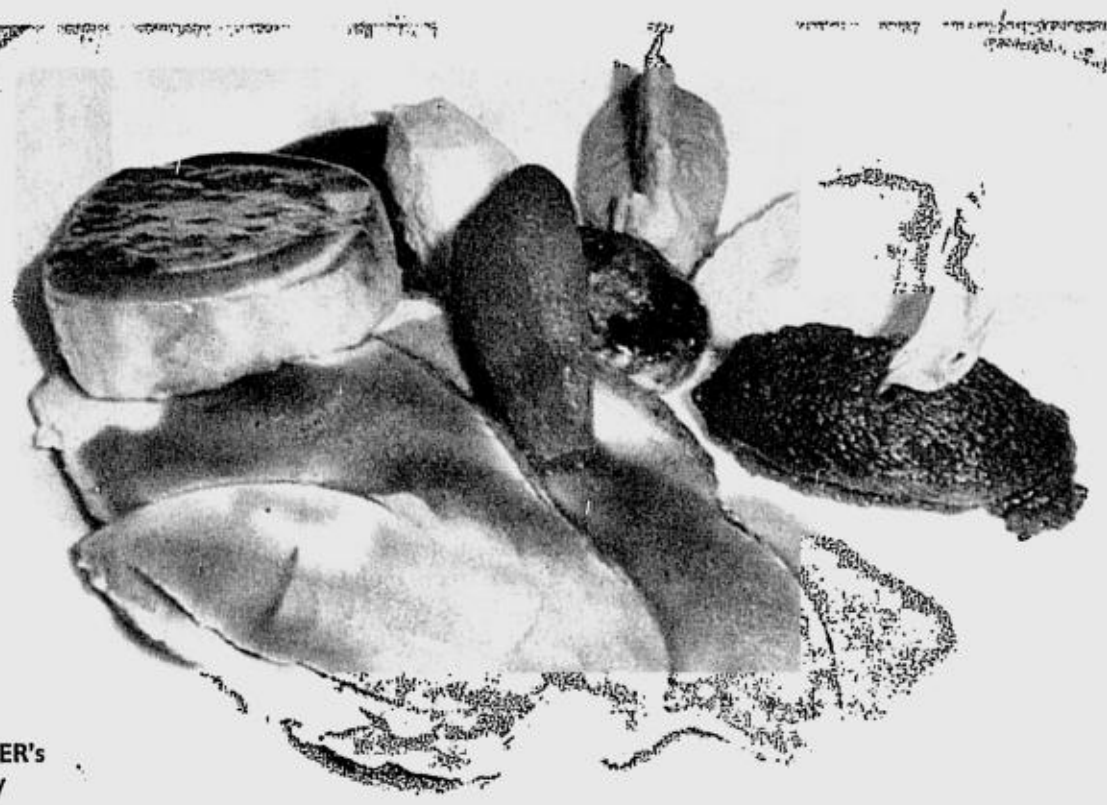
Text GP, send to 2456, then text <your preferred color> to denote the cause you want to support

Text GP<space>on, send to 2456 to subscribe to daily GP inspirationals

Text GP<space>pasko, send to 2456 to download *Pasko Na Naman* ringtone



CRISPY
Lobster with
Citrus Foam



FARMER's
Turkey

A royal Christmas menu

CHRISTMAS
Pudding

THERE are things I consider priceless. Good food and wonderful company are at the top of my list. On Nov. 26, my stars were aglow as I found myself enjoying both.

I was at the Intercon's Prince Albert to sample Chef Cyrille Soenen's Christmas menu. Cyrille says it was inspired by "of course, Christmas, my country, family reunions/traditions (in this case the Christmas pudding and Stollen) and, yes, the season of winter. I use a lot of ingredients that are at their best during the month of December—chestnuts, oysters, duck liver, flounder and turkey. In Europe, we eat turkey at Christmas time."

Whether it is that time of year or not, this man has a way of creating edible masterpieces with the textures, flavors and colors so vibrant, so alive. This is the kind of talent that sets this dear friend of mine apart from the rest.

That evening was one of gastronomic pleasure. And, just as he has done for many years, Chef Cyrille once again made my dining experience at the Prince Albert feel like the night before Christmas.

Christmas menu

Appetizer

Crispy Lobster with Foam of Citrus Emulsion; Pan-fried Duck Liver; Salad of Shiitake Confit and Green Apple; Hazelnut Oil

Soup

Parmentier of Sweet Potatoes with Truffle Duck Liver Raviolis; Creamy Prawns Broth; Oysters Blanc Manger

Fish

Braised Flounder with Cauliflower Velvet Tartare of Soft Boiled Egg; Beluga Caviar; Roasted Sea Bass with Ragout of Mussels and Clams; Smoke Vegetables Fricassee

Meat

Farmer's Turkey; Traditional Style Roasted Prime Rib of Beef; Yorkshire Pudding; Baked Potatoes and Seasonal Vegetables; Roasted Lamb Loin; Crusted Fine Herb Mouseline with Chestnut and Mushroom

Dessert

Christmas Pudding, Ginger Sauce; Pan-fried Stollen with Burnt Orange Sauce Brandy Egg Nog Ice cream

This Christmas menu will only be available on the evening of the 24th and for lunch and dinner on the 25th.

CHEF Cyrille Soenen

And as if Christmas dinner isn't enough, the Prince Albert is also doing a December Foie Gras promotion. It's *foie gras* all the way, from appetizer to main course!

I highly recommended this one and I'll do this over and over and over again. Delicious!

My favorites: Duck Liver Terrine, Mango Compote & Crispy Ginger Bread; Cream of Cepes Mushroom with Duck Liver Raviolis; Roasted Sea Bass and Duck Liver soufflé, Fricassee of Mushroom and Asparagus, Port Wine Sauce; Beef Tournedos Rossini with Creamy Truffle Mashed Potatoes.

KITCHEN RESCUE

Reggie Aspiras

I would like to make creme brulee for Christmas. Is it difficult?

Mia Antonio

It's the easiest thing to make. Follow the recipe and you'll be making it like a pro. If by some stroke of luck it doesn't turn out well, there is still hope.

As I always say in class, if you can't make this, maybe cooking is not for you and you might want to change careers... Singing, sewing and pottery might be better options! Kidding!

The best part about creme brulee is the gadget called a torch. Gourdo's and Chef's Nook have them!

9 egg yolks
1/2 c sugar
2 c cream (Elle & Vire, President)
1 vanilla bean, split (Santis) or 1 tsp vanilla extract
1/3 c granulated white sugar (to sprinkle over the top before torching)

· Preheat oven to 300°F.
· Combine cream and vanilla bean and let sit for 2 hours. If using extract, skip this procedure and move on to step 3.
· In a bowl, whisk egg yolks and sugar until sugar dissolves and mixture is thick and pale yellow.
· Add cream and vanilla, whisk until blended.
· Strain and skim.
· Divide into ramekins.
· Bake in water bath until slightly set. It should still wiggle a bit in the center. I usually do mine 40-50 minutes.
· Remove from oven and leave in water bath until cool.
· Chill before serving.
· When ready to serve, sprinkle sugar over each custard and blow torch to caramelize.
· Serve with fresh fruits/berries.

I entertain a lot during the holidays. My problem is I buy a lot of fresh thyme and rosemary for cooking but I never seem to finish a whole pack from Antonio's. I don't like using them once dry. What else could I do with them? *Sayang naman* to throw them away.

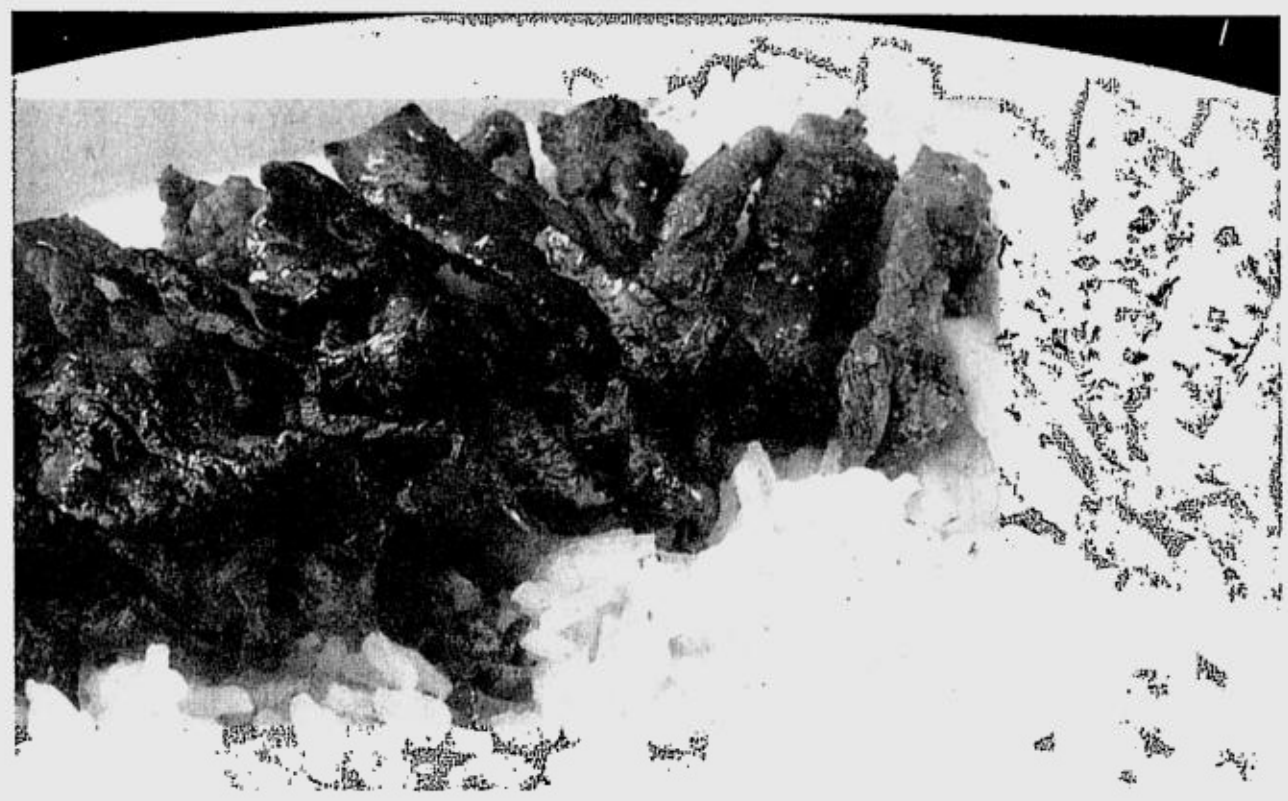
L. Dans

Kudos to you for using no less than fresh herbs for cooking! Since you entertain a lot, this tip might come in handy. In Europe, my friends and classmates used to snip off the leaves from both thyme and rosemary, put them in their ash trays and let the smokers burn the herbs away. I swear that this is about the only time you'd be happy to have smokers around! It just smells so good!

Another nifty idea is to wrap them in tissue paper and put them inside mini cotton pouches which you slip under your sheets, duvet covers, pillow cases and even your closet. They're great as added foliage to your centerpieces. Not only are they visually pretty, their scent lends a festive flair to your table as well.

For questions, comments or suggestions, text 0917-8399888.

AVAILABLE every hour of the day are Snow Floats—softdrinks topped with a scoop of soft-serve ice cream; regular Sundae Cones in vanilla; Special Sundaes drizzled with Chocolate or Strawberry syrup; and colorful Rainbow Twists—soft-serve ice cream topped with Ube, Strawberry, Corn, Chocolate and Bubble Gum flavors



MINISTOP breakfast means cups of hot coffee and a choice of Beef Tapa, Pork Tocino or Longanisa.

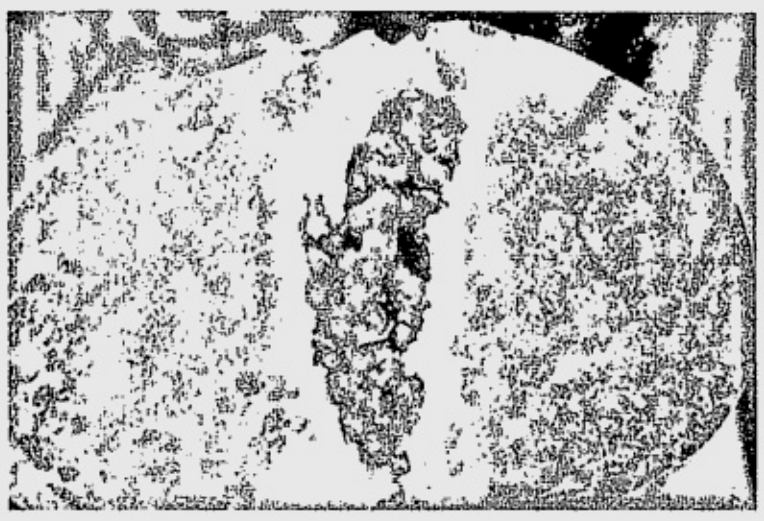
Comfort food 24/7

Filipinos are big on food. Whatever time of day it is, there's a reliable stop in your neighborhood that will answer the grumblings of your tummy. Ministop combo-store has comfort food to satisfy the cravings of everyone, 24 hours a day. Check out some of its mouthwatering choices on this page.

THE BUSY mom can get microwaveable meals like Liempo, Menudo and Chicken Pork Adobo, as well as Japanese favorites like Katsudon and Shrimp Tempura.

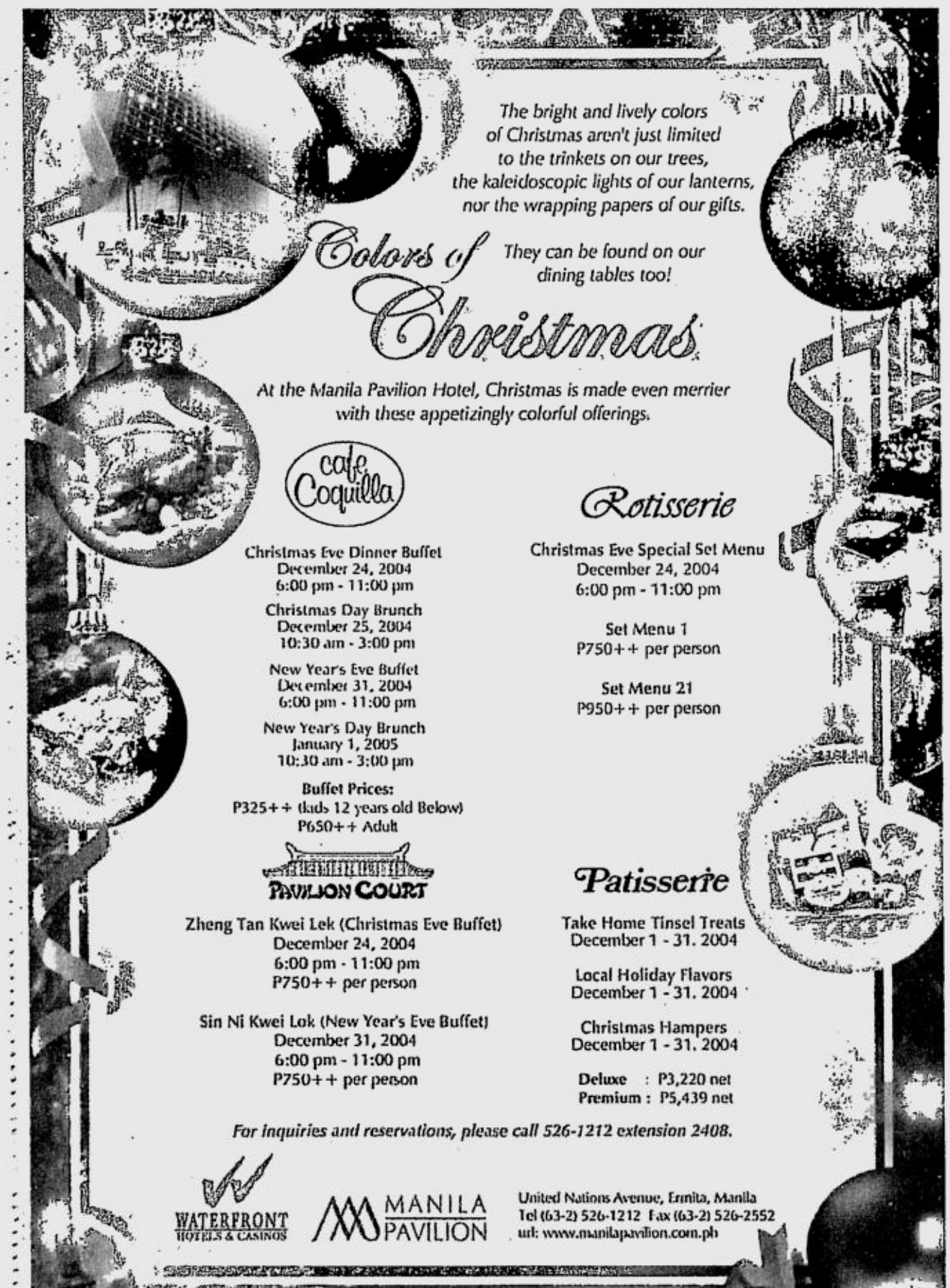
THOSE who prefer Chinese can get Crispy Wanton, Pork Siomai and Siopao with *bola-bola* and *asado* fillings.

PASTA lovers will be able to get Spaghetti Carbonara, Lasagna and Baked Macaroni for a filling snack or a light meal.



A MINISTOP bestseller is the Japanese-inspired Kariman (it means "crunchy bread"), a bun filled with chicken, barbecue, tuna or pork *asado*.

HAVE large, crispy chicken pieces with a cup of steaming rice for a quick filling lunch.



Healthy cooking needs right cookware

COOKING healthy means more than just using the right ingredients and methods, it also means using a special kind of cookware.

Tefal's new Vitaly Range may have the correct cookware for this purpose.

The Meat Grill Pan has deep-ribbed interiors that collect the fat and leave it in the pan. High walls limit grease splashes.

The Fish Grill Pan has an oval shape and is shallow to make it easy to slide the fish off to a plate easily. Low grill lines minimize breaking.

The Wok Pan is for stir-frying side dishes and garnitures. Its 24-cm diameter is good for about two portions of vegetables, to go with meat or fish.

All items have Tefal's signature "thermospot" feature, which seals in the flavors of the food and indicates the precise time for cooking.

They are also non-stick, with convenient "stay cool" handles and are coated inside and out to make cleaning easy.

Tefal is available in leading supermarket and department stores nationwide. It is exclusively distributed by Rustan Marketing Corp.

Call 8909703.

Add a super gift box to your party fare

SUPER Bowl of China offers the Super Gift Box containing a 2.75-3 k whole suckling pig complete with *hoisin* sauce or a 1.75-k whole roast duck with plum sauce.

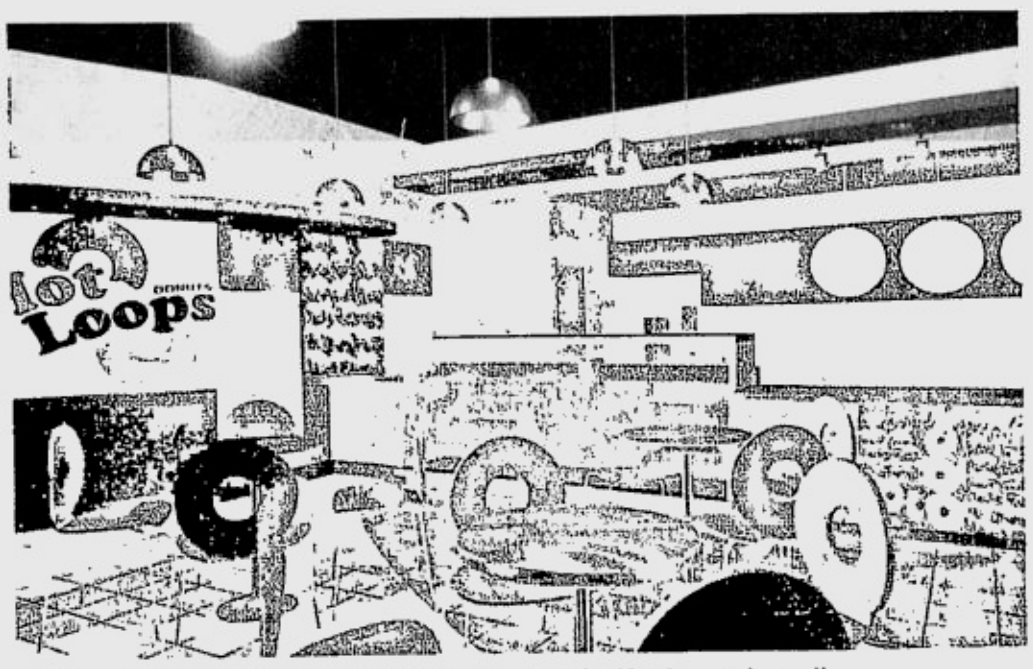
The suckling pig or roast duck, two of the most popular dishes from Super Bowl of China, is sure to be a welcome addition to any Christmas party, reunion, homecoming and special family meals.

Call 7472845 or 7472048. Order should be placed at least two days in advance.

Super Bowl of China branches are at the Megastrip, SM Megamall; Jupiter Street in Bel-Air, Makati; Glorietta 4, Ayala Center; Chefs Avenue in Festival Mall, Alabang; 2/L, SM City North Edsa; Eastwood City Walk 2, Libis; and G/F, SM Fairview. Soon to open is Super Bowl of China in Greenhills, San Juan.

Visit www.superbowl.com.ph

SUPERBOWL of China's Super Gift Box: Roast Duck



THE STORE'S colorful interior is as tempting as the Hot Loops donut line.

Hot donuts for the family

A LINE-UP of tempting tastes and sweet surprises was unveiled to the public as Hot Loops Donuts opened its first dine-in shop last Dec. 12 at the annex of Robinsons Place Pioneer in Mandaluyong City.

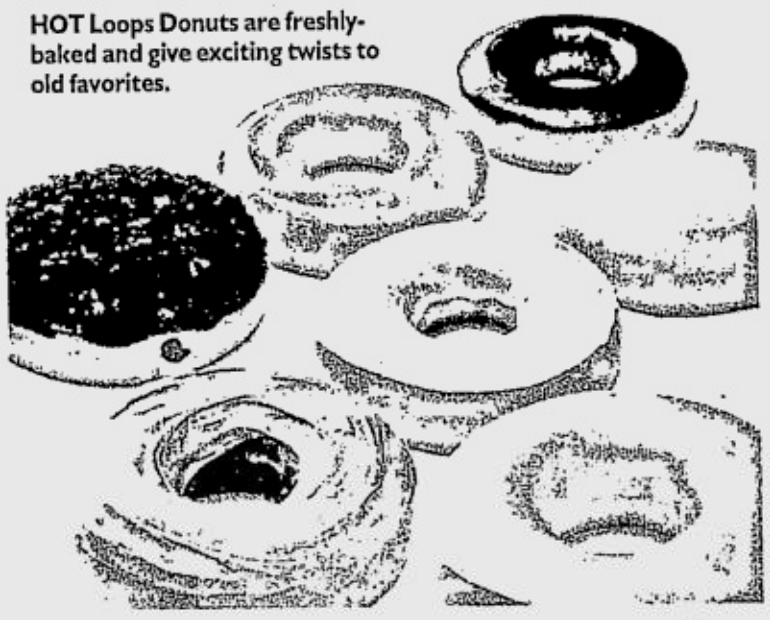
Owned and operated by JG Summit Holdings Inc. (JGSHI), Hot Loops Donuts brings to the fore an all-time favorite treat, sold at a price that is easy on the pocket.

Hot Loops is also set to open a second branch in Robinsons Galleria. Very soon, it will also make its goodies available in Robinsons Supermarkets and Big R outlets across the metropolis.

For its dine-in shops, the donuts are baked in plain sight inside the store. They come in an assortment of flavors—the classics, which include Choco-Lickety, Strawberry Good, Strawberry-Filled Forever and Bavarian Dream, are combined with novel, exciting varieties such as Peanut Better, Caramelt-in-your-Mouth, Choco Caramel Crunch, Choco-Nutty Rush, Original Sin (Apple Cinnamon), Cheesecake and Vanilla Crumble.

Swathed in lively red, green and creamy yellow gold, embellished with hanging lamps as well as donut-shaped chairs, the Hot Loops shop is reflective of the brand's wholesome, fun, dynamic and rather avant-garde personality.

HOT Loops Donuts are freshly-baked and give exciting twists to old favorites.



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Arrivals

1906	MADRID	11 30	DELAYED
822	HONGKONG	11 45	DELAYED
1701	NEW YORK	11 20	DELAYED
911-11-11	PIZZAHUT	11 11	ON TIME
071	PARIS	11 25	DELAYED
743	AMSTERDAM	11 50	DELAYED

Pizza Hut

HATE THE WAIT?

Special menu for the holidays

DINING OUT

JADE Garden Cantonese Restaurant offers One Christmas Feast set menu for 12 persons. The menu includes Roasted Meat Combination, Yang Chow Hot and Sour Seafood Soup, Steamed Pink Lapu-lapu with Golden Ham, Fried Pigeons marinated in wine, Sautéed Pacific Clams with Black Mushrooms, Braised Lamb and Beancurd Stick in Hot Pot, Chiu Chow Salted Pork Fried Rice, Prawns with Efu Noodles and Hot Red Beans Puree and Fried Sweet Mini Buns.

The restaurant also features A Merry Budget Party Offer set menu. This includes Kuchay Roll with Seaweed, Sweet Corn with Fresh Chicken Soup, Roast Chicken, Sweet and Sour Pork, Fish Fillet with Bittermelon in Tausi Sauce, Yeung Chow Fried Rice, Braised Efu Noodles with Mushrooms, Chilled Almond Jelly and Iced Lemon Tea. This offer must have a minimum 10 tables (120 persons). Jade Garden is located at Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 8922314/ 8922636.

MANILA Pavilion Hotel presents Pangaon Kita Food Festival until Dec. 18 at Cafe Coquilla. Featured dishes of Palo, Leyte are Grilled Scallops with Herbs and Butter Sauce, Kinilaw nga Tanglgue, Samar Chicken Galantina, Shrimp and Pomelo Salad, Baked Mussels and Chargrilled Milkfish wrapped in banana leaves. Call 5261212.

DUSIT Hotel Nikko's Benjarong Royal Thai restaurant presents Thai Holiday Delight set menu on Dec. 24-25 and Dec. 31-Jan. 1, 2005. A complimentary glass of wine will be given to all diners availing of the set menu on the said dates. Diners on New Year's Eve get free noise makers for the New Year's Eve countdown at Fiesta San Miguel. Call 8673333 local 3351-3353.

THE RICHMONDE Hotel cooks up a feast on Dec. 24 and 25 at The Grill. The buffet spread features Turkey Salad with Mango, Grapes and Walnuts, Smoked Salmon on Herbed Pancake, New Zealand Mussels with Sun Dried Tomatoes and Cucumber Salsa, Shrimp Cocktail, Calamari Crunch, Lamb Chops with Minted Hollandaise Sauce, Grilled Blue Marlin with Lemon Herbed Sauce, Chili Crab, Pastel de Lengua, Paella a la Valenciana, Roast Turkey with Chestnut Stuffing and Cranberry Sauce, Festive Lechon, Roast Prime Rib of Beef with Peppercorn Sauce and Christmas Ham Leg Glazed with Honey and Pineapple.

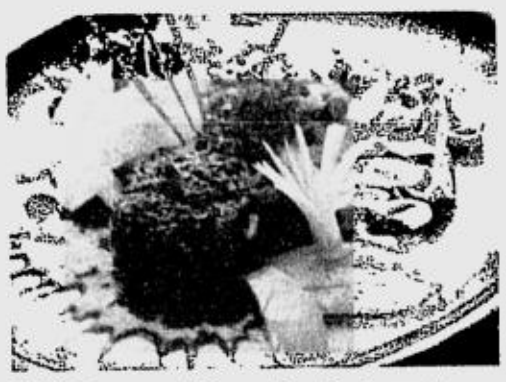
OUTBACK Restaurant offers Lamb Rack, Aussie Strip and Alaskan King Crab Legs to make your holiday meal more delightful. Also try New Zealand eight-bone 16-oz Lamb Rack. Outback Restaurants are located at Glorietta IV, Libis and Alabang Town Center.

SULO Hotel's Diwata Cocktail Lounge presents Barchow. It offers Gambas ala Jillo, Calamares, Tenderloin Tips and Chicken Liver wrapped in Bacon. Call 9245051 to 71.

GYOZATEI Authentic Japanese Dumplings offers Grilled Pork Belly and Chicken Wings, Grilled Asparagus wrapped in Bacon, Grilled Fish, Tempura and Teppanyaki. Gyozatei is located at Morato Square cor. Tomas Morato and Scout Madrinan, QC. Call 9253923.

PEKING Garden Chinese Restaurant features a Christmas set menu for 12. This includes Peking Duck, Mashed Spinach with Scallop and Fish Potage, Seafood Mashed Taro Roll with Crispy Vegetables, Steamed Lapu-lapu in Hot Chili Sauce, Stewed Tientsin Cabbage with Superior Squash Soup, Deep-fried Peppercorn Crabs, Braised E-fu Noodles with Strawmushrooms and Coconut Custard. Peking Garden is located at 2/L, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 8179066/ 67.

KIMPURA showcases a double treat for Christmas diners. One Christmas Boat features Fresh Cold Prawns, Omelet Roll, California Roll Special, Big Roll and Oyster Fries. A Feast for 4 has Miso Soup, California Roll Special, Shrimp Tempura, Chicken Teriyaki, Tonkatsu, Sukiyaki Steak with Beansprouts, Kimpura Fried Rice and Coffee Jelly. Kimpura is located at Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan, tels. 7218816/ 7218869; and 2/L, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati, tels. 8932307/ 8924456.



BLUE Bacon and Green Eggs Restaurant features Tenderloin of Beef with Blue Cheese and Herb Crust, Broiled Fillet of Lapu-lapu with Tomatoes, Anchovies and Garlic, Whole Egg Pasta with Peas, Smoked Salmon and Capers, Angel Meringue with Fruits, Crab and Wild Mushroom Chowder, Mixed Green Salad with Pears, Walnuts and Blue Cheese. Call 7268054/ 7212717.

Fastfood chain offers milk to kids

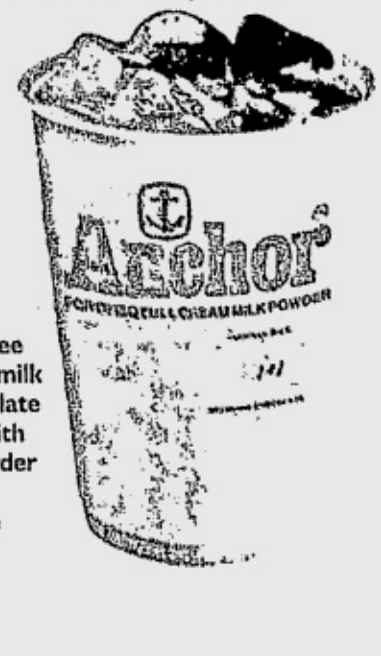
KIDS can have Anchor Full Cream Milk when they visit KFC.

Every order of the KFC Chuckie Meal comes with a free Astroboy toy and Anchor Milk in chocolate flavor, the first and only chocolate-flavored full cream milk available today.

That is two-in-one goodness of nutritious milk in a delicious choco flavor.

Anchor two-in-one choco can also be a beverage option with any KFC meal.

Promo runs until Dec. 31. Visit any KFC branch nationwide and have a a glass of Anchor Full Cream Milk with your KFC.



GET a free Anchor milk in chocolate flavor with every order of KFC Chuckie meal.

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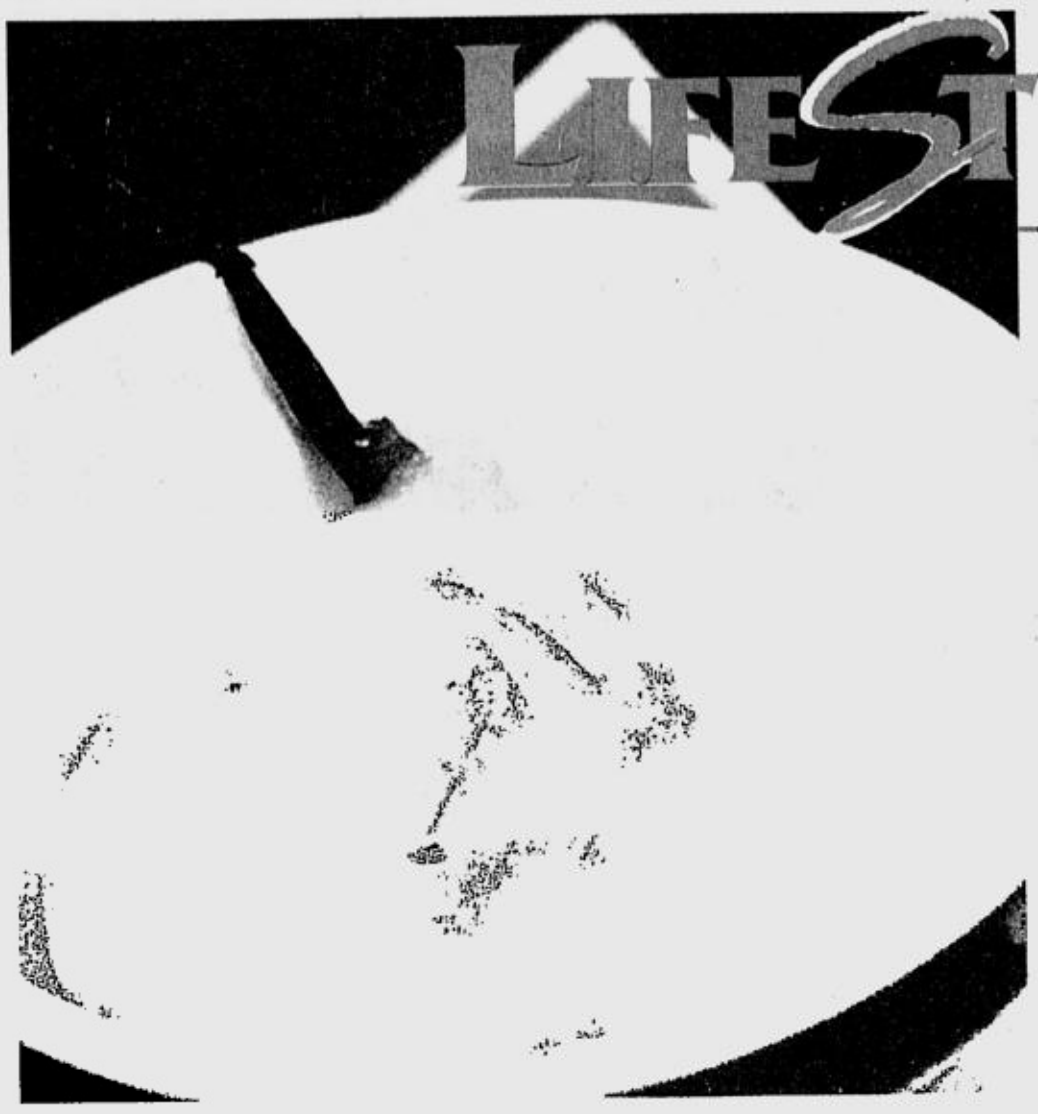

Zhongnanhai's menu draws from the cuisine of not just one or two but six places

BEIJING-STYLE Sliced Pork with Sweetened Soya Sauce

SHANGHAI-STYLE Poached Pear with Fragrant Flower

SHANGHAI-STYLE Braised Chicken with Basil Leaves in Rice Wine

ZHONGNANHAI Tea Menu consists of 18 types of tea with different therapeutic and medicinal qualities.

A showcase of China's culinary treasures

Text by Vangie Baga-Reyes
Photos by Rudy Esperas

WHILE many restaurants specialize in cuisine from one particular region in China, the new Zhongnanhai Chinese Bistro is probably the only eating place in town that serves authentic dishes not just from one or two, but six culinary centers.

Yes, the extensive menu of ZNH (short for Zhongnanhai) includes specialties from Shanghai, Beijing, Szechuan, Hunan, Fujian and Guangdong.

Ruth Velasco Co says the restaurant is trying to showcase the varied Chinese cuisines that give endless sensual delights. Co is president of Mac-Co Holdings Inc., the company that put up ZNH. With her husband Arnold, she also owns and runs the sandwich place Oliver's, the ice cream Haagen Dazs and the chocolate place Max Brenner.

"And we do it by preparing the dishes in different styles, but in accordance with the diverse cooking practices of each region," Co adds. She points out that Chinese cuisine is more than just sweet and sour fish fillet or steamed fish.

Latest project

Before opening ZNH, the Co couple flew to China with a group of friends for food tasting. They ate in different places in Shanghai, gathered recipes

A SHOWCASE/ D2

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It may not be obvious but you could be suffering from hair loss. It appears as overall thinning (2 hair strands where 5 used to be) that seems unnoticeable...until it gets worse. Don't feel helpless. Spot these signs right away and get proven hair loss solutions at **Svenson International.** Our treatments will effectively eliminate the main cause of thinning and falling hair. We'll even restore fullness and give more body to your limp, wispy hair for a lush and healthier look.

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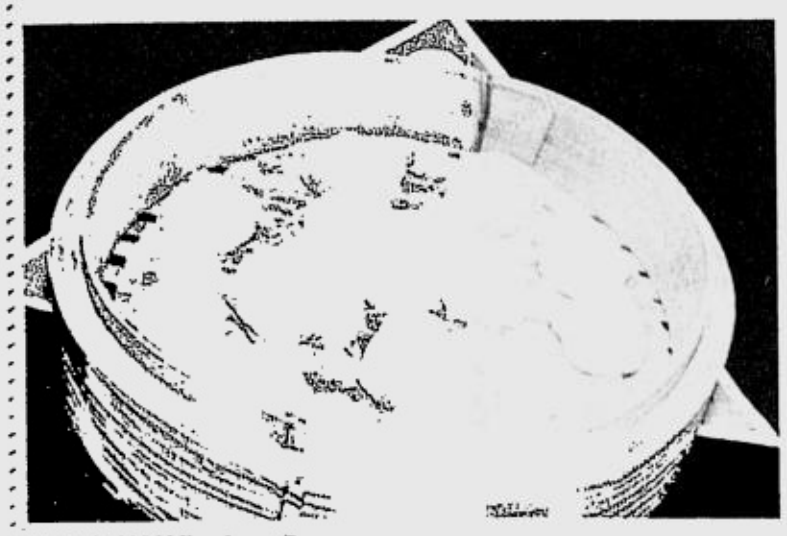
The only way to enjoy wine this Christmas.
Let the season's cheer flow with Novellino wines. Bold, refreshing flavors. Rich, sparkling textures. The holidays have never tasted so good.

SHANGHAI-STYLE Green Onion Pancake



SHANGHAI Xiao Long Pao

THE HIP, non-traditional interiors of the new Chinese bistro

A showcase of China's culinary treasures

From page D1

and interviewed various chefs.

Their trip produced the ZNH 10-page menu, including 17 appetizers, 25 kinds of dim sum, nine soups, and various seafood, chicken, duck, pork, beef, bean curd, and vegetable dishes, noodles and rice. ZNH has also a long list of Chinese tea for customers to choose from.

The ZNH menu has a map of China at the back to give diners an idea of where the different dishes come from—Beijing to the North, Guangzhou to the South, Shanghai and Fujian to the East and Szechuan to the West.

Chinese delight

ZNH does not look like everyone's idea of a Chinese restaurant. For one thing, it does not have the usual showcase displaying the various cold cuts. For another, the servers sport trendy hair styles and coloring.

The two-story place is hip and non-traditional, painted white and red-orange. Chairs are of dark leather and wood. A display corner features huge glass jars containing various imported Chinese herbs and spices, including Szechuan pepper, red dates, dried Shanghai chili, white fungus, and red beans. ZNH has an open kitchen allowing diners to watch the chefs as their orders are cooked.

The appetizers include Shanghai-style Green Onion Pancake (P68), Cantonese-style Fried Bean Curd in Spicy Salt (P88), Szechuan-style Steamed Dumpling in Chili Sauce (P128) and Beijing-style Steamed Chicken with Peanut Sauce (P128).

For seafood lovers, ZNH suggests its signature dishes—Szechuan-style Steamed Garoupa fillet in minced bean (P288), Shanghai-style Braised Prawns in pumpkin sauce served with steamed or fried buns (P318) and Shanghai-style Sautéed River Shrimp (P388).

Pork and beef items chefs recommend include the Shanghai-style Stir-Fried Diced Eight Treasures minced in spicy sauce (P168) and Cantonese style Pan-fried beef tenderloin in honey pepper sauce (P288).

For vegetables, the Beijing-style Fried String Beans with minced pork (P168) and Cantonese-style Sautéed *kangkong* with preserved bean paste (P148) are good choices.

Since a Chinese meal is not complete without noodles or rice, ZNH offers the Shanghai-style Dan-Dan Noodles in spicy sauce (P98), Shanghai-style Fried Noodles with Eight Treasures in Chili Sauce (P128) and Shanghai-style Fried Glutinous rice cake (P150).

For dim sum, the Shanghai-style Green Onion Pancake (P68), Deep-fried cocoon-shape radish puffs (P78), Cantonese-style Michael's steamed crispy radish roll-over (P88), and Steamed shrimp dumplings with Basil (P88) seem likely to be best-sellers.

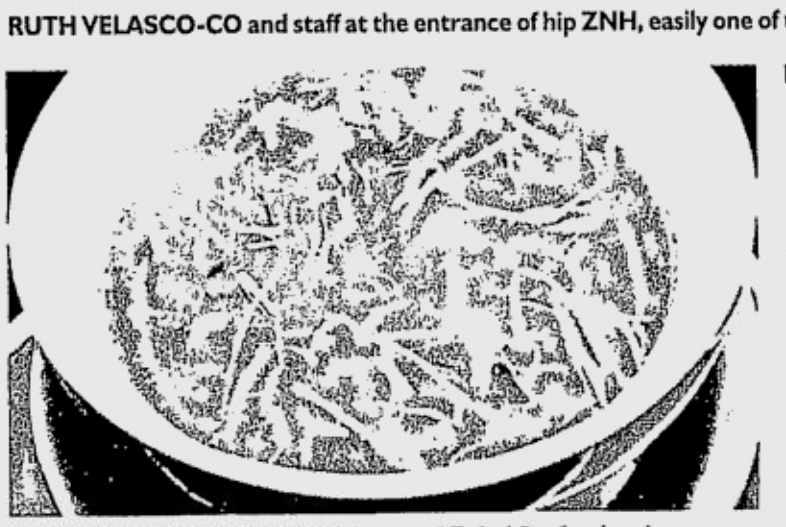
Dessert includes the Shanghai-style Chilled Sweetened Snow Fungus Jelly (P48) and Shanghai-style Poached Pear with Fragrant Flower (P58).

Co assures diners that dishes are prepared without *vetsin* (monosodium glutamate).

Zhongnanhai Chinese Bistro (tels. 7581111 and 7582222) is located at Greenbelt 2, Ayala Center, Makati.

E-mail the author at vbaga@inquirer.com.ph

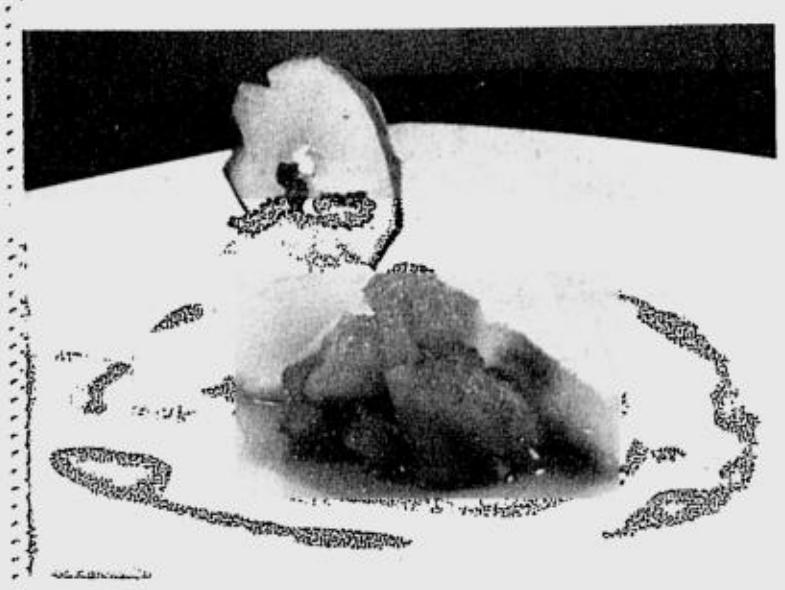
RUTH VELASCO-CO and staff at the entrance of hip ZNH, easily one of the most popular restaurants in Greenbelt



HONG KONG-STYLE Braised Assorted Dried Seafood and Shredded Abalone Soup

SHANGHAI-STYLE Steamed Rice Roll with Crispy Radish

Recipes to brighten up the holiday spread



CAMEMBERT Wedge with Caramelized Bananas

SEARED Foie Gras Napoleon with Red Apple and Green Mirliton Compote

CHEF Iñigo Castillo of the Center for Culinary Arts (CCA Manila) offers some easy to prepare recipes that will brighten up the dining table during the holidays.

Castillo, a CCA graduate, teaches Food Presentation, Mis en Place and Meat and Fish Fabrication. He said the menu he drew up included the most common holiday flavors.

CCA Manila received recently the Superbrands Award, the only culinary school in the Philippines to get the distinction.

Call CCA Manila at 4264840/4264841; e-mail marketing@cca-manila.com; or visit www.cca-manila.com

Almond-Crusted Salmon with Spiced Carrot Sauce and Potato Galette

50 g/2 tbsp almonds
50 g/2 tbsp bread crumbs
100 g/4 tbsp butter
5 g salt or to taste
200 g salmon
50 g/½ pc onion
100 g/1 c carrot
20 g/1 tsp ginger
120 ml/1 c chicken or fish stock
1 pc cloves
½ pod cardamom
1pc bay leaf
1pc large potato

Process almonds, bread crumbs and butter until the mixture achieves a dough-like consistency.

Shape into squares the size of salmon fillet and put aside.

Make sauce by sauteeing onions, carrots and ginger in butter.

Add chicken stock and bring to a simmer.

Add spices and simmer.

Put aside.

To make galette, cut the potato using mandoline or into paper-thin slices.

Brush slices with butter and place on parchment paper and bake till crisp.

Season and sear salmon in oil till brown then remove. Add crust and finish in oven.

Heat sauce and assemble.

To assemble, pour sauce at the center of the plate and place the salmon. Lean the potato on it. Place the vegetables on the other side.

Serves one.

Seared Foie Gras Napoleon with Red Apple and Green Mirliton Compote

100 g *foie gras*
1 pc apple, cored and diced
60 g/½ pc onions
200 g/1 c white sugar
50 ml balsamic vinegar
130 g/1 pc *sayote*
300 ml/2 c red wine
300 ml/2 c white wine
3 sheets filo pastry

Sauté half the onion in butter till translucent and add apple.

When apple is coated with butter, add the red wine, balsamic and half the sugar.

Let reduce till syrupy and put aside.

In another pan, saute half the onion till translucent and add *sayote*.

When *sayote* is coated with butter, add white wine and sugar.

Let reduce till syrupy and put aside.

Brush filo sheets with melted butter and layer with the other filo sheets.

Cut little circles in the filo.

Bake in an oven till golden brown. Put aside.

Season *foie gras* and coat with flour. Sear over a very high heat flame till brown.

To assemble arrange alternate layers of filo, the apple and the *sayote*. Top with *foie gras*.

Serves three.

Camembert Wedge with Caramelized Bananas

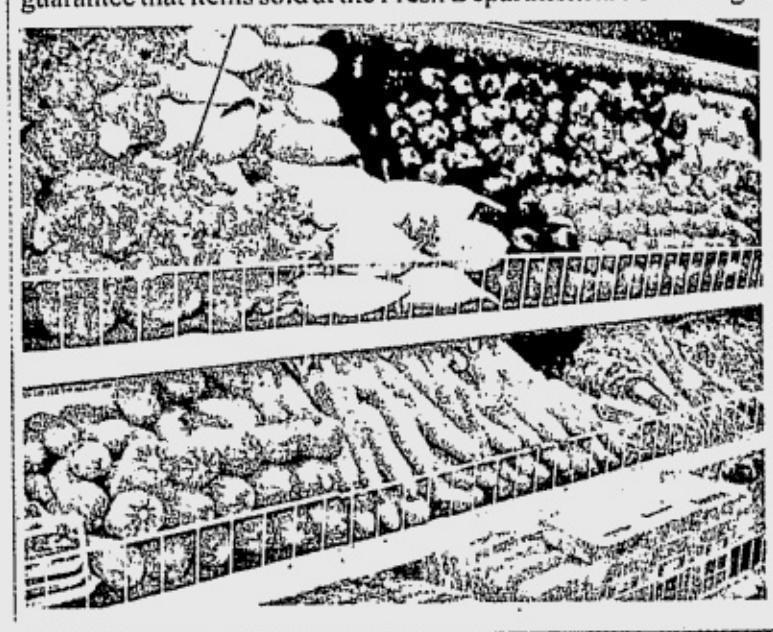
5 pcs banana, peeled and diced small
100 g/⅓ c sugar
120 ml water
½ c/1 scoop vanilla ice cream
as desired apple chips
1 wedge Camembert cheese

Place sugar and water in a sauce pan and cook until it turns into caramel. Remove from heat and add bananas. Serve with a wedge of Camembert, ice cream and apple chips.

Serves one.

Robinsons Supermarket | Robinsons SUPERCENTER | big R Supercenter

Robinsons Supermarket, Robinsons Supercenter, & Big R Supercenter boasts of a wide variety of the freshest produce - fruits and vegetables, meat, poultry, fish and seafood items all sold in a clean and convenient environment. Strict quality control and food handling procedures guarantee that items sold at the Fresh Department are of the highest quality.



In addition, we also have a wide selection of grocery and household products from brands most trusted by households at low prices through the WOW! price off campaign. Aside from the variety of products and merchandise available, we offer year-round treats and surprises to customers like price-drops, product bundlings, freebies and various store promotions, thus providing customers with value for money shopping. That means more choices, more money-saving options for customers.

The Supermarket and Supercenter also take pride in having friendly and efficient customer service staff always ready to assist customers in their grocery shopping needs. All these features create a pleasant, enjoyable and delightful shopping experience.

Watch out for the opening of Robinsons Supermarket in Commonwealth, Quezon City.

PRE-CHRISTMAS SALE

BIG, BIG DISCOUNTS!

DEC. 17 UP TO MIDNIGHT*
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- Good Earth Plaza, Avenida
- Susano Complex, Novaliches
- Eastwood City, Libis

Robinsons Supercenter
- Robinsons Place Pioneer

Big R Supercenter
- Robinsons Malls
- Nepo Mall, Dagupan
- Limketkai Center, Cagayan De Oro

PRE-CHRISTMAS SALE
RAFFLE PROMO
Dec. 17, 18 & 19
Get a chance to
WIN
KITCHEN APPLIANCES
with a very P300 worth of purchase (for any of Robinsons Supermarket, Robinsons Supercenter or Big R Supercenter.
Raffle is on Dec. 20, 5:00pm

KEY to a Million
RAFFLE PROMO
Nov. 15 to Feb. 15, 2004

"Have an early Christmas treat! Join Robinsons Supermarket, Robinsons, Supercenter & Big R Supercenter's Key to a Million Raffle Promo! Over P4,000,000 worth in cash & prizes await you!

A minimum single receipt purchase of P300 entitles you to a raffle coupon.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2735 Series of 2004

Yuletide gift choices for as low as
P75!

The ultimate solution to all your gift-giving needs this coming holiday season are the popular Christmas Baskets. Available in assorted packages and prices, one will surely find a gift choice that fits his taste and budget. The wide selection of gift ideas can also be purchased with ease using Robinsons Gift Certificates or the Robinsons Card.

Kotex Celebrity Meet & Greet at Robinsons Supercenter Pioneer

Visit Robinsons Supercenter Pioneer and watch the 3 R girls of GMA 7, Anna Domingo, Chal Lontoc and Reem Chanco on December 17 as they hang around for interviews and autograph signing at the Kotex shelf at 2pm. Plus... you can win loads of cool freebies when you buy Kimberly Clark products and join any of the activity booths from December 18 and 19.

TONY Roma's baby back ribs grilled to perfection

FAJITA, a top favorite among Chili's diners

HEFTY portions of hamburgers, chicken fingers and Philly steak sandwiches at TGI Friday's

'To-mah-to' or 'to-may-to,' it can only be one ketchup

WHAT do TGI Friday's and Tony Roma's at Glorietta, and Chili's at Greenbelt have in common?

They all use only Heinz Tomato Ketchup.

Lilet Martinez of TGI Friday's says generally they have a youngish clientele. But on weekends they get children and grandparents, too.

In view of this, TGI Friday's has adapted its menu to accommodate the eating preferences of both groups. Its regular fare consists of American dishes, mainly burgers and salads. It has added *inihaw na liempo* and Pinoy chicken barbecue for the sake of *lolos* and *lolas*.

Family patronage, Martinez adds, has given the Glorietta outlet the highest annual guest count among over 200 TGI Friday's stores all over the world from 1995-2001. It averaged 50,000 guests per month.

Laine de Jesus, Chili's marketing head, says weekends also mean families enjoying the restaurant's American Southwestern dishes like steaks, salads, wraps (served with *tostada* chips and salsa), *fajitas* (grilled with bell peppers and onions, and served with warm tortillas, guacamole, *pica de gallo*, cheese and sour cream) and grilled entrées (baby back ribs, chicken, prawns, tuna, salmon and pork chops).

Rosa T. Eugenio, general manager of Tony Roma's, says though the restaurant aims to draw the business crowd, it also recognizes the Asian custom of dining as a family.

She says from Friday to Sunday many families go to the restaurant for dinner.

To make sure their customers will keep coming back, TGI Friday's, Chili's and Tony Roma's ensures the high quality of the food they serve in big portions. All the dishes are approved by the parent firms in the United States. This means ingredients, style or manner of preparation and cooking, as well as the sauces and condiments to be used, must have the approval of their franchisers.

Bottles of Heinz Tomato Ketchup are permanent fixtures of table settings in outlets of TGI Friday's, Chili's and Tony Roma's not just in the Philippines but in other parts of the world as well.

Martinez says Heinz Tomato Ketchup is "thicker, richer and tastier, making it a perfect complement for a number of TGI Friday's bestsellers like Philly Steak Sandwich, Friday's Hamburger and Chicken Fingers."

De Jesus says the ketchup goes well with Chili's Oldtimer Burger, Chicken Crispers and Club Sandwich, three of the most popular items on the menu.

Special Christmas Rate:

Php 2,400net in a Premium Room

(For an overnight stay for 2 adults and 2 children under the age of 10 years old)

Valid from December 01, 2004 to January 15, 2005

The perfect time and place for the perfect Christmas.

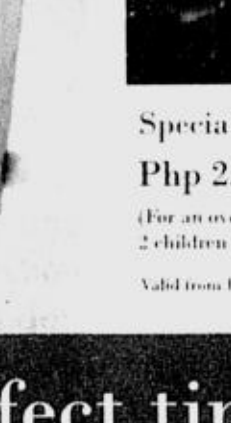
Hotel PONTE FINO BATANGAS CITY

Definitely a fine Filipino experience.

Experience true indulgence...

Take the opportunity to enjoy our Christmas Activities:

- Sinabang Gala
- Christmas Day Buffet
- New Year's Eve Party with live band and fireworks
- New Year's Day Buffet featuring New Batangas Cuisine



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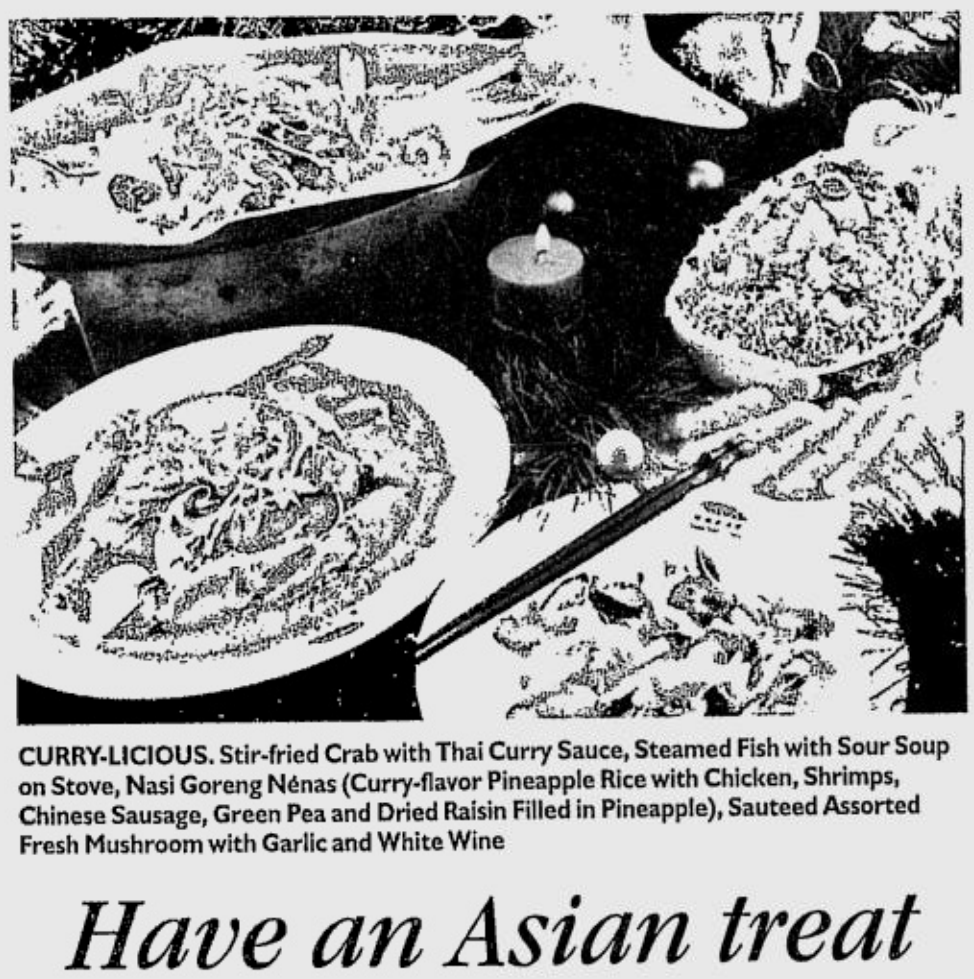
E-mail: reservation@pontefino.com.ph

Inquire about our Family and Barkada Christmas Packages.



CURRY-LICIOUS. Stir-fried Crab with Thai Curry Sauce, Steamed Fish with Sour Soup on Stove, Nasi Goreng Nénas (Curry-flavor Pineapple Rice with Chicken, Shrimps, Chinese Sausage, Green Pea and Dried Raisin Filled in Pineapple), Sauteed Assorted Fresh Mushroom with Garlic and White Wine

Have an Asian treat this Christmas

SPICE up your holidays by serving a one-of-a-kind feast evocative of the exotic Orient. Enjoy a wide array of authentic Malaysian, Indian, Thai and Singaporean culinary specialties.

Start with the crispy Mixed Deep Fried Special consisting of minced prawn on sugarcane, *samosas*, spring roll and chicken with *pandanus* leaves, fried golden brown. Pair it with Penang Char Kway Teow, stir-fried rice noodles with shrimps, bean sprouts, green chives and egg.

You may want to try the popular steamed Hainanese Chicken, with a choice of dipping sauces. Or have the Deep-fried Spicy King Prawns in a Sarong, large prawns wrapped in *pandan* leaves and deep fried.

The Stir-fried Crab with Thai Curry Sauce is a unique blend of sweet and spicy while the Nasi Goreng Nenas is a novel concoction of curry-flavored fried rice with chicken, shrimps, Chinese sausage, green peas and dried raisins served on a pineapple boat.

Savor the taste of a fresh catch with Steamed Fish with Soup served on a steel stove. For a taste of a classic, try the Sauteed Assorted Fresh Mushroom with Garlic and White Wine.

The Banana Leaf Curry House is a member of the Confiserie de la Chaine Des Rotisseurs. It serves a selection of breads, appetizers, soups, as well as seafood, meat, vegetable, rice and noodle dishes from across Asia.

Branches are located at G/F Plaza Building, Greenbelt 1, Ayala Center, Makati, (tel. 8128618, 8121475); 2/F The Podium, 18 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong (6876808, 6876818); and Theater Drive, Alabang Town Center, Muntinlupa (7728833, 7728899).

WHO do you call about offensive ads? /E4

The three 'kusineras'

This trio of women borrows family recipes for home-made holiday treats

By Cathy Babao Guballa
Contributor

WAWA Linda Lacson delights in whipping up dishes for her family.

CHRISTMAS Ham. Soft, succulent and sugar-glazed

CALLOS. Its tenderness lingers long after the last bite.

LIKE artistic talent, the skill for cooking and baking may have to be in the genes.

Linda Lacson, Boot Roa Ureta and Angela Colet all come from families where eating and good food is a passion. This holiday season, the three women put to good use time-honored recipes passed on from generation to generation to bring mouth-watering dishes and sweets to our Christmas tables.

Tapping into their treasure trove of recipes, they embarked on small businesses that would indulge their passions. "It's not work at all," Ureta says, "When you love what you do, no matter how tired you are, it's still a joy to do it."

And if the passion that the women put into their cooking and baking is absorbed by the dishes they whip up, you can be sure the people who partake of their creations can also feel the love that goes into them.

Wawa Linda's kitchen

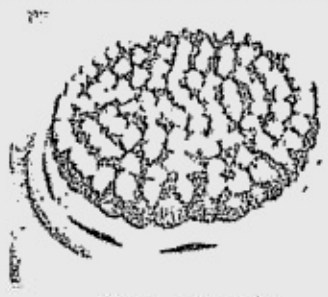
LACSON (tel. 5330934, 6355524 or 0917-3268807) has been a widow for more than two decades now. A woman who always loved to cook for her family, she entered the food order business three years ago. Her famous dishes are culled from recipes passed on to her by her father-in-law, former Negros Occidental governor Rafael Lacson. Her top three most popular dishes are paella, Christmas ham and *callos*.

Lacson's *callos* (P600/large size pyrex dish) is one of the best I have tasted. Being a *callos* connoisseur of sorts, after I tried Lacson's version for the first time, I raved about it for days! The tripe is very tender and tasty, bathed in a delectable sauce of olive oil and spices and garnished with black and green olives and tasty *chorizo del rey*.

Lacson's *callos* just melts in your mouth and the memory of it lingers on for days, like your first kiss—something you look forward to. Her Christmas ham (P400/kilo) is succulent and delicious. Soft and sugar glazed, it is a de-

THE THREE/ E3

MANGO TORTE EXTRAORDINAIRE



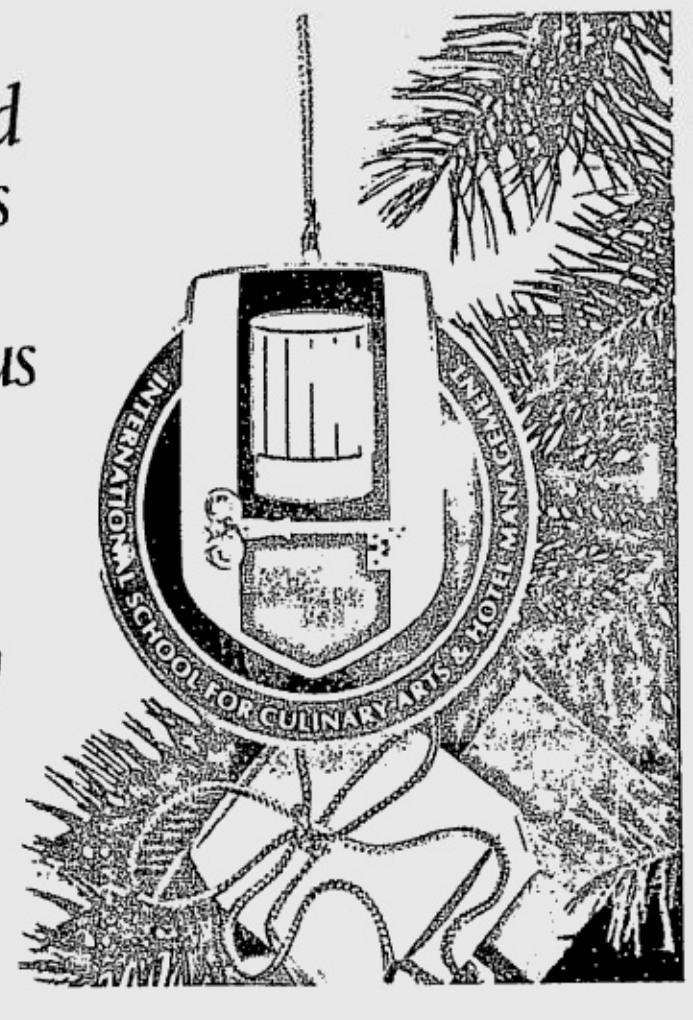
The House Specialty
Crispy-chewy nougatine crust with mangoes and cream
We have the best melt in your mouth ENSAYMADA
And unbelievably fruit laden STRAWBERRY CAKE

For your Christmas party needs

Try our mouth watering Best Sellers:
CALLOS • LENGUA • PAELLA • BLACK PAELLA
Sample our Gourmet Savory dishes:
Chicken Galantina & Relleno • Gourmet Pate
Kare-Kare • Chap Chae • Beef Pochero/Cocido

DULCELIN Gourmet Specialties
Linda or Lina / Tel.: 374-2165 or 67
36 Times Street • West Triangle • Quezon City

A Blessed Christmas and a Prosperous New Year from ISCAHM!



Discounted Rates for those enrolling on or before Dec. 23, 2004

Our Short Courses for 2005:

3-month Fundamentals in Culinary Arts
Starts January 19, 2005; Wednesdays
January 22, 2005; Saturdays

3-month Fundamentals in Pastry Arts
Starts January 18, 2005; Tuesdays
January 22, 2005; Saturdays

3-month Flavors of Asia
Starts January 15, 2005; Saturdays

1-month Fundamentals in Bread Baking
Starts January 21, 2005; Fridays

We are now accepting enrollees for the 1-year Diploma courses, SY 2005-06

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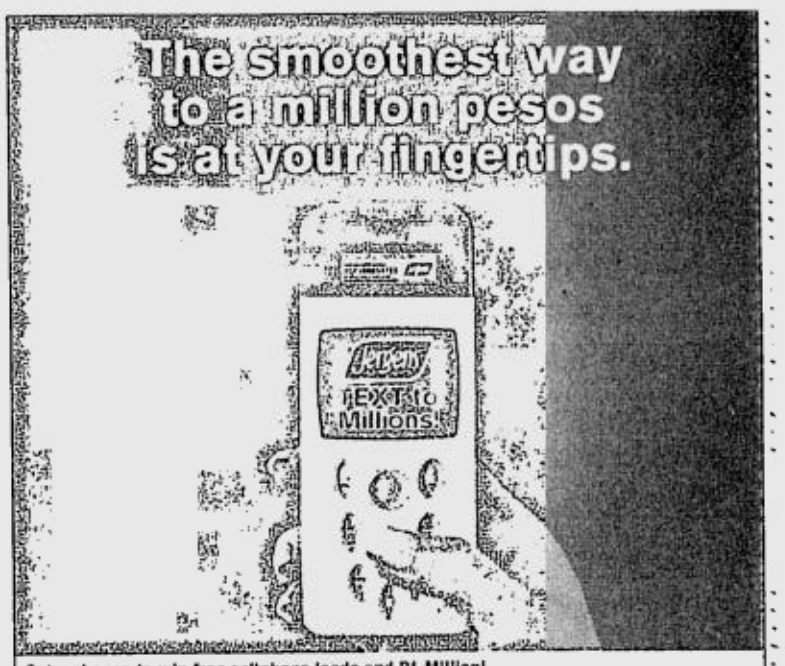
www.iscahm.com



Get a chance to win free cellphone loads and P1 Million!
First time texters must register as follows:
BNT REG <City or Town>/<Province>/<Name>/<Complete Address>/<Sex>/<Age>/<Code>
Send to 399 for Smart & Talk 'N Text subscribers or 2350 for Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers.
See posters for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2105 Series of 2004

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

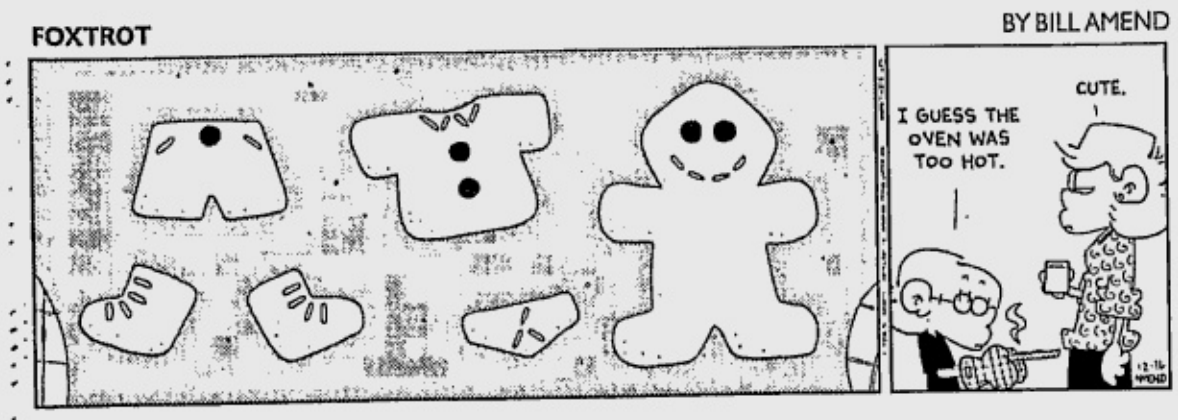
You're in for a crazy Christmas with Bugs Bunny, Tweety, Daffy, Sylvester and Taz! See them in the fun!

Looney Tunes

ROBINSONS Malls
www.robinsonsmalls.com

FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND



A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA

MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG

PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

INQUISITORS SUFFER THE EFFECTS OF HARRY POTTER'S SPELL

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a fine mind and a great imagination. Others admire your thinking. You can overcome physical limitations in your life. You are quite complex and are often guided by a major purpose in life. Your friends and family are important to you. The year ahead can be one of the best years of your life!
Birthdate of: Arthur C. Clarke, author; Benjamin Bratt, actor; Margaret Mead, anthropologist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might have a consciousness-expanding experience that broadens your appreciation of life in the next few weeks. Somehow, you seem to learn new things about the world.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You can attract money to you from other sources in the next few weeks. Possibly, your partner will get a raise or a bonus. Somehow, goodies come to you.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Love affairs, close friendships and partnerships are blessed in the next month. You find it easy to express your affection for others.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Everything related to your job and your profession will work more smoothly in the next month. In particular, you'll enjoy good relationships with co-workers and customers.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): The month ahead is a fabulous time for fun, entertainment, having a great time and, of course, romance! You feel no need to pretend to be what you are not.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): In the next few weeks, you need more rest and relaxation at home. Relations with family members will improve. Redecorating at home will appeal to you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have a lovely month ahead! As Venus changes signs today, it brings you a greater appreciation of your everyday surroundings. Your social life will pick up too!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): The next few weeks can be financially beneficial if you handle them right. Certainly, financial opportunities will come your way. The downside is—you're feeling extravagant!

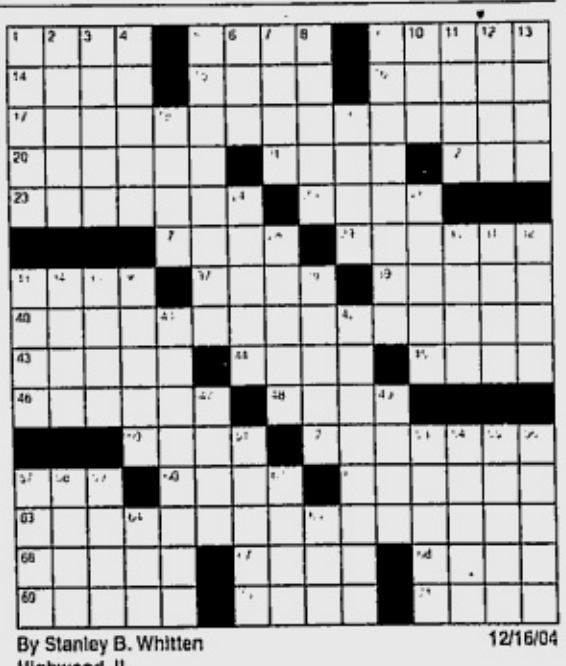
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Don't be surprised to find you have an increasing desire to see others in the next few weeks. You'll make the necessary compromises. You want to have a good time with friends.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You might find that you need to care for someone in the next few weeks. You won't mind doing this, because you see there is joy in laboring for those you love. It's not a sacrifice.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): All activities are strongly favored in the next four weeks. People are easily friendly to you now, and vice versa. Great!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Regardless of what you do in your job, you will be asked to help artistically in some way—design, layout, painting, wallpapering, redecorating and such. You'll make things look better.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

12/16/04

ACROSS
1 __ up (energizes)
5 Fair and square
9 Diamond covers?
14 Sea shade
15 Finished
16 Bay window
17 Popular card game
20 Venetian bridge
21 Sentry's command
22 Compass pt.
23 Certain swordsman
25 Raised platform
27 Feudal peon
29 Non-rigid airships
33 Sailor's mop
37 Kedrova of "Zorba the Greek"
39 Distrustful
40 Reagan's debate rejoinder
43 Buenos __, Arg.
44 Slide sideways
45 Advantage
46 Small cave
48 Organic compound
50 Crust rock
52 Crow blackbird
57 Madison Ave. output
60 "La Boheme" role
62 Tropical climbers
63 Recidivists
66 Intended
67 Flying saucers, briefly
68 Extreme anger
69 Bender
70 Cereal grains
71 Genesis garden

DOWN
1 Military chaplain
2 Outfit
3 Contents of cocoons
4 French room
5 Merrily
6 Charlottesville sch.
7 Clockmaker Thomas
8 Tire feature
9 Cornmeal bread
10 Jackie's "O"
11 Disencumbers
12 Cribbage markers
13 Passel
18 Suffix for diseases
19 Snitch
24 Small combos
26 Military tactic
28 Odd event
30 Lake near Las Vegas
31 Bluenose
32 "Auld Lang __"
33 Male deer
34 Buzzing sound
35 Dynamic intro?
36 Harte and Saberhagen
38 Growing old
41 Approximate calculation
42 Without a scent
47 Leave out
49 Reclined
51 Secret love affair
53 Core group
54 Work, as dough
55 Big
56 German industrial city
57 Parts of jackets
58 Low in pitch
59 Train to box
61 Questionable
64 Compass pt.
65 Enemy

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

S	A	V	E		C	A	T	E	R		B	A	R	T
C	O	O	L		O	M	E	G	A		A	L	E	E
A	N	I	M	A	L	M	A	G	N	E	T	I	S	M
R	E	D		C	L	A	M		S	H	E	E	P	
			B	R	A	N		P	A	T	E	N	T	S
V	E	T	O	E	R		D	A	R	E	D			
I	R	O	N			D	I	R	G	E		B	E	E
C	R	E	A	T	U	R	E	C	O	M	F	O	R	T
E	S	S		S	L	O	T	H			O	D	I	N
			G	H	A	P	S		L	U	R	F	K	A
A	T	T	A	I	N	S		G	I	R	D			
B	R	I	E	F			T	U	G	S		S	I	P
B	E	A	S	T	L	Y	B	E	H	A	V	I	O	R
O	K	R	A		Y	E	A	S	T		I	N	T	O
T	S	A	R		E	A	R	T	H		E	G	A	D

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12/16/04

MIKROKOSMOS

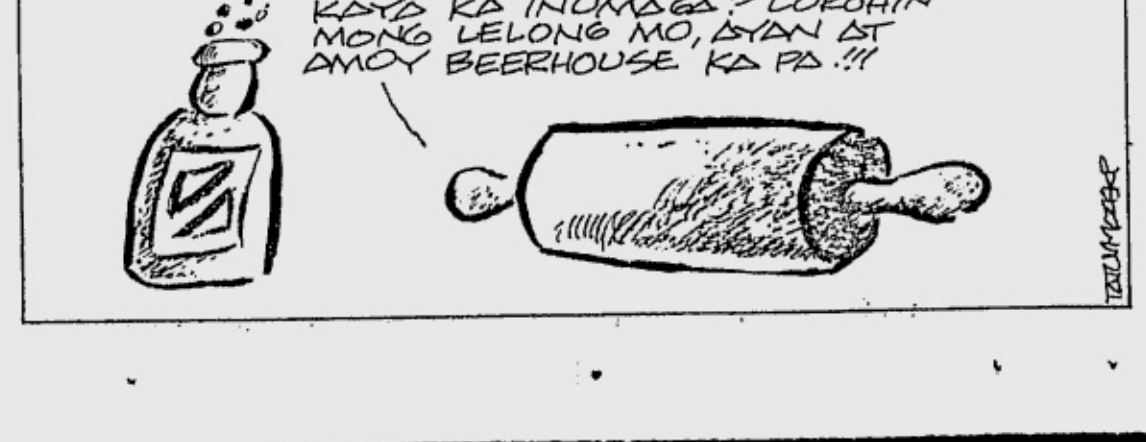
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA



LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

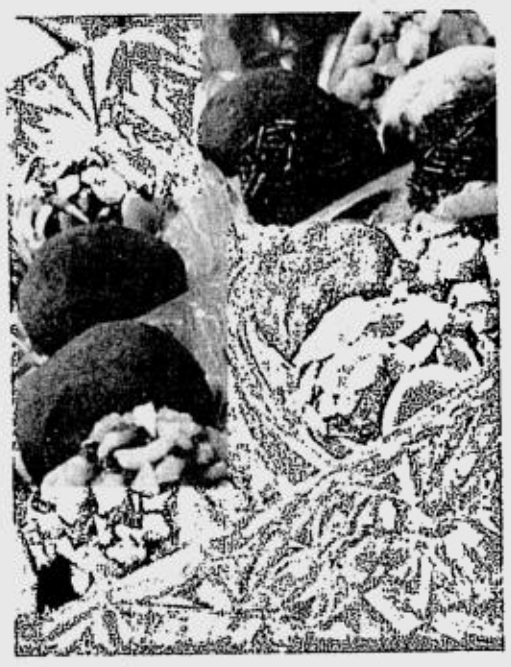
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

DELIGHTFULLY delicious rhum cake

The three 'kusineras'

From page E1



TRUFFLES. Sinful treats

BOOT Roa Ureta

ANGELA Colet

light to eat and have at the Christmas table and will keep, if there is any left over, all the way into the new year.

This early, Lacson's kitchen is already abuzz with orders from her regular clients.

Aldo's delight

URETA (tels. 09217170447 and 9318990) lost her eldest son Aldo a few years ago after a brief but valiant fight with a brain tumor. After his death, Boot, with help from husband radio and television host and director Ariel Ureta, focused her energies on raising her children.

Among the passions that helped preserve her sanity, so to speak, was cooking and baking for them. "Everyone on both sides of my family—Cuerva and Roa—loves to cook and bake. My *lola* Lidia Cuerva, after whom I was named, would always say 'a woman must know how to cook'," Ureta says.

You will never meet a Cuerva woman who does not know her way around the kitchen.

Ureta's famous rhum cake (P600 for a 9 1/2 in a bundt pan) is a recipe of her mom's sister, her Tita Vicky Loyzaga (mom to Bing and Teresa). "She prepared it for us at one family dinner and immediately we were hooked and couldn't get enough!" Ureta recalls.

Her aunt gladly shared the recipe and, from then on, Boot has been making these delicious, intoxicating (figuratively speaking) cakes in her oven at the family home in Quezon City.

A bite of Ureta's moist rhum cake leaves you giddy with delight and wanting for more. Ureta says she doesn't scrimp on her ingredients. She prefers Magnolia butter, which she swears makes her cakes creamier. Hers is the best rhum cake we have tasted in a long, long time.

Swell sweets

COLET (tels.09175367827 and 9316680) is as bubbly and whimsical as the gingerbread houses (P120/kit) she creates; her smile and laughter as unforgettable as the truffles she lovingly makes.

"My Ate Mita taught me how to bake and I have been exposed to baking since I was a little girl, but chocolate is my forte," Colet smiles.

It was another sister, her Ate Chiqui, who opened the door that led her to create gingerbread houses. Beacon, where Chiqui teaches, commissioned her to prepare the components of a gingerbread house that their students could put together.

And so the artistic Colet, whose day job is producing several programs on Studio 23, prepared the components to a gingerbread house that any child can put together. Colet's sweet house has walls made of gingerbread and included "construction components" like marshmallows, candy sprinkles, chocolate covered candies, colored rice krispies, a cake board to set the house on and icing to "cement" the house together.

Her truffles, on the other hand, are sensuous treats for the more sophisticated palate. One recalls Renee Zellwegger's comment in "Down with Love" that a piece of chocolate can replace sex anytime.

Biting into Colet's truffles you can almost feel the release so much endorphin from your brain into the body—that's how sinfully good they are. On the outside the truffles are coated with a rich dark chocolate (P180/12), Belgian (P250/12) if you wish. Inside there are different kinds of liqueur or spirit—Bailey's, rhum or any other alcoholic drink—depending on the client's preference.

WHIMSICAL gingerbread houses

Jazz up your breakfast

BREAKFAST is an important meal as it powers you up for the day ahead.

If the usual breakfast possibilities make the meal uninviting, Maya mixes offer several options to make early morning eating more interesting. The breakfast items contain carbohydrates, protein and fat to help give you a good start.

The Maya Original Hotcake Mix and Maya Oven Toaster Banana Cake Mix are made from high-quality wheat flour and are suitable for crepes and hotcakes for breakfast.

Here is an easy recipe to help jazz up breakfast—Chicken and Ham Crepe with Cheese Sauce, using the Maya Original Hotcake Mix.

Chicken and Ham Crepe with Creamy Cheese Sauce

Crepe:
1-1/2 c milk
2 eggs
pinch of salt
1 c Maya Original Hotcake Mix
2 tbsp butter

Filling: 2 tbsp butter or margarine
1 c cooked and diced chicken meat
½ c diced ham

Sauce: 2 tbsp butter or margarine
2 tbsp Gold Medal all-purpose flour
½ c evaporated milk
½ c chicken stock
1 c grated cheese

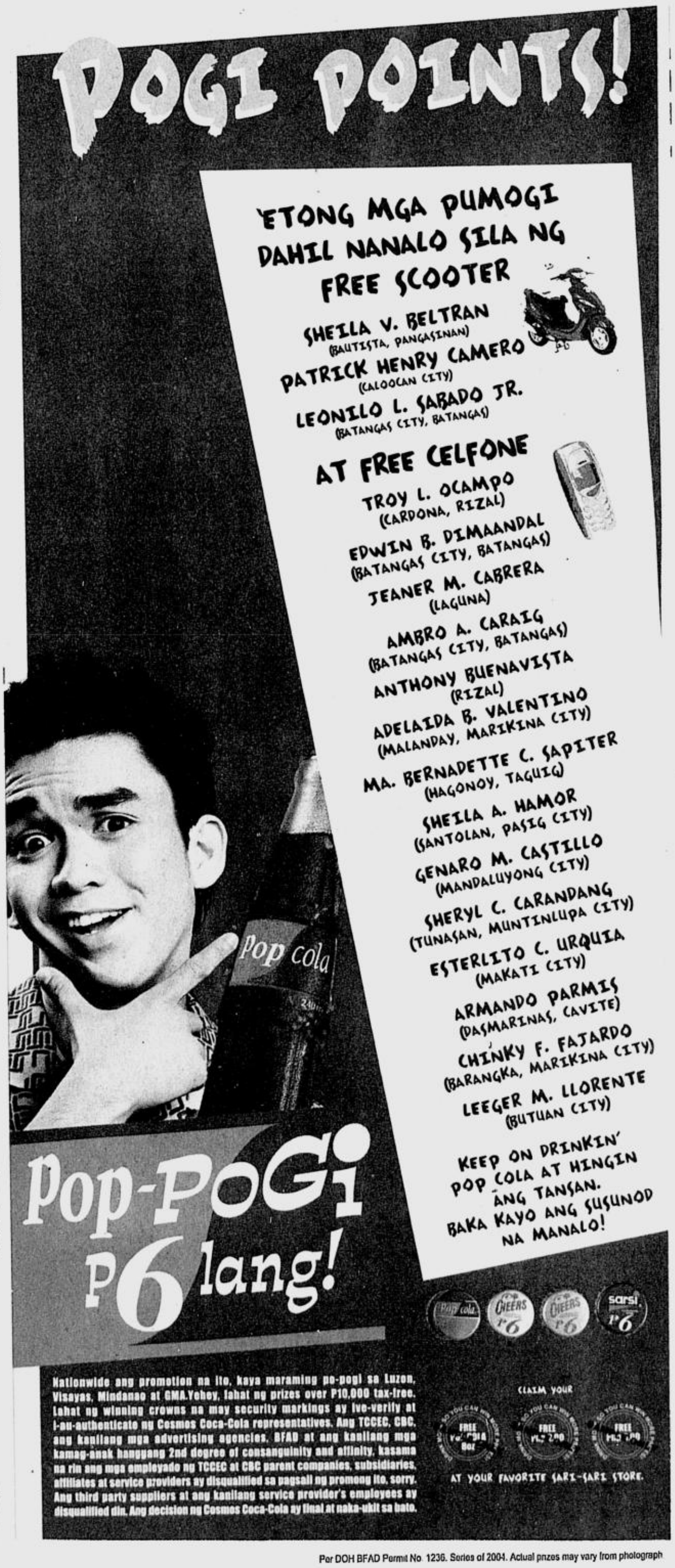
Prepare crepes: In a bowl, combine milk, eggs and salt. Beat well then add the hotcake mix. Beat until smooth then add the butter. Heat a non-stick pan and brush lightly with oil. Pour a little of the mixture into the pan. Tilt the pan from side to side to cover the bottom evenly. Cook until bubbly then flip to cook the other side. Do the same for all the batter. Set aside.

Prepare filling: Heat butter or margarine in a skillet and stir-fry the chicken meat and ham until brown. Set aside.

Prepare sauce: Melt butter. Stir in flour then gradually pour in the milk and chicken stock. Cook over low heat stirring continuously to prevent lumps. Stir in the cheese. Season to taste.

To assemble: Place about ¼ c of the filling at the center of each crepe and top with 2 tbsp sauce. Roll as in jelly roll and arrange on a serving platter. Pour extra sauce on top and sprinkle with additional grated cheese.

The Maya Kitchen Culinary Arts Center is at the 8/F, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Avenue, Makati. Call 8921185, 8955011 local 108.



Write to AdBoard about offensive ads

THE CONSUMER

Marietta Velasco Giron

Let's say 'no' to ads that are offensive to taste, ads that require parental guidance, ads that capitalize on infirmities, or ads that make exaggerated claims. Now is a good time because Adboard is re-evaluating its advertising code

HOW about more of those radio-television ads that make us smile? They're just what we need to ease the impact of upsetting news about disasters, killings, scams, lawlessness, political squabbles, etc.

Let's say "no" to ads that are offensive to taste, ads that require parental guidance, ads that capitalize on infirmities, or ads that make exaggerated claims.

If our fellow consumers have more comments in mind, we urge them to write to the Advertising Board of the Philippines or AdBoard (fax: 8187109, e-mail: adboard@pldtdsl.net, or call 8186113/8177724). Now is a good time to do that because the board is re-evaluating its 30-year-old advertising code.

The AdBoard, incidentally, started recently a series of dialogues with different sectors to discuss its code of ethics and self-regulatory policies.

Last week, for instance, ad people hosted a roundtable discussion with newspaper columnists. Expectedly, the guests aired their disgust over "distasteful" ads. One columnist raged against a skincare ad that focused on a young fellow rubbing his butt against a bench in front of an old lady. Another columnist recalled the controversy over the line, "*Nakatikim ka na ba ng 15 anyos*?" in a liquor ad.

AdBoard chair Cerge M. Remonde assured the columnists, "As advertisers, we are very conscious about public opinion. We will listen as long as you tell us your opinion... and we will pull out the offending advertising."

The officials admitted, however, that the advertising code of ethics did not have a legal force. Nonetheless, members voluntarily abided by its regulations and provisions, they pointed out.

Obviously, advertisers have no choice. Before their ad can be aired or published, it has to be submitted to the AdBoard's prescreening committee that checks its compliance with the code, as well as compliance with standards set by government regulatory agencies.

By the way, here are some items from the report of a spokesperson of the 30-year-old AdBoard (formerly Philippine Board of Advertising). The AdBoard has 336 members, mostly major advertisers. Print media's share of the total advertising business is about 10 percent; television takes the lion's share, 72 percent.

Last year, the total advertising revenue of (newspaper) broadsheets was P6.1 billion. That was a paltry sum compared to the P43-billion revenue, reportedly of just the top two television networks.

Flier's concerns

It speaks well of a company to have a customer service representative who responds promptly to complaints of customers.

This week, we praise Cebu Pacific customer service frontliner Daphne Ty for replying to the complaint of frequent-flier customer Jerome Escobedo. Ty not only apologized but also wrote: "Rest assured that we will be forwarding your requests to all the departments you mentioned. We thank you for the feedback as it would help us improve our services."

Escobedo (Jerome.Escobedo@dalsemi.com) complained: "Whenever I go through the whole process of getting my flight reserved, pay it by Fastphone and get the much-heralded e-ticket by fax, I have to spend so much time and effort to finish the job."

Here are his other comments: Hotline does not live up to the marketing pitch, "95 percent on-time-all-the-time." Line connection can be time-consuming.

TxtCeb—or reservation by text messaging—is more costly compared to using a landline of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone company, considering that the process of booking a reservation entails multiple text messaging at P2.50 each. It will be cheaper to use PLDT, especially if you are calling long-distance. I suggest TxtCeb should be free of charge.

Online booking—Does not mention promo rates. Does it mean that online rates are based on regular fare?

E-Ticket—It is convenient because customers don't have to go out and buy the ticket. But glitches can be costly and time consuming. For example, when a careless agent forgets important data reference, customer has to make several phone calls to get things done.

E-mail the author at mgiron@i-manila.com.ph.

celebrate the BEST OF PAMPANGA
DECEMBER 5 - 30

SM City Pampanga joins in celebrating these colorful annual events that promote and preserve the Kapampangan cultural heritage.

SCHEDULE

MUTYA NING KAPAMPANGAN PRE-PAGEANT
a quest for Pampanga's prized beauties
December 5, 5pm - Entertainment Plaza

PAMPANGA DAY
433rd Founding Anniversary Celebration of Pampanga highlighting various cultural events plus celebrity appearances
December 10

• Joross & Roxanne of the Star Circle Quest	3:00pm	Entertainment Plaza
• Jerome Abalos	4:30pm	Entertainment Plaza
• Luke Mejares	5:30pm	SM Amphitheater
• San Miguel Beer Krismasaya Street Party	6:00pm	SM Amphitheater
• South Border	8:00pm	SM Amphitheater

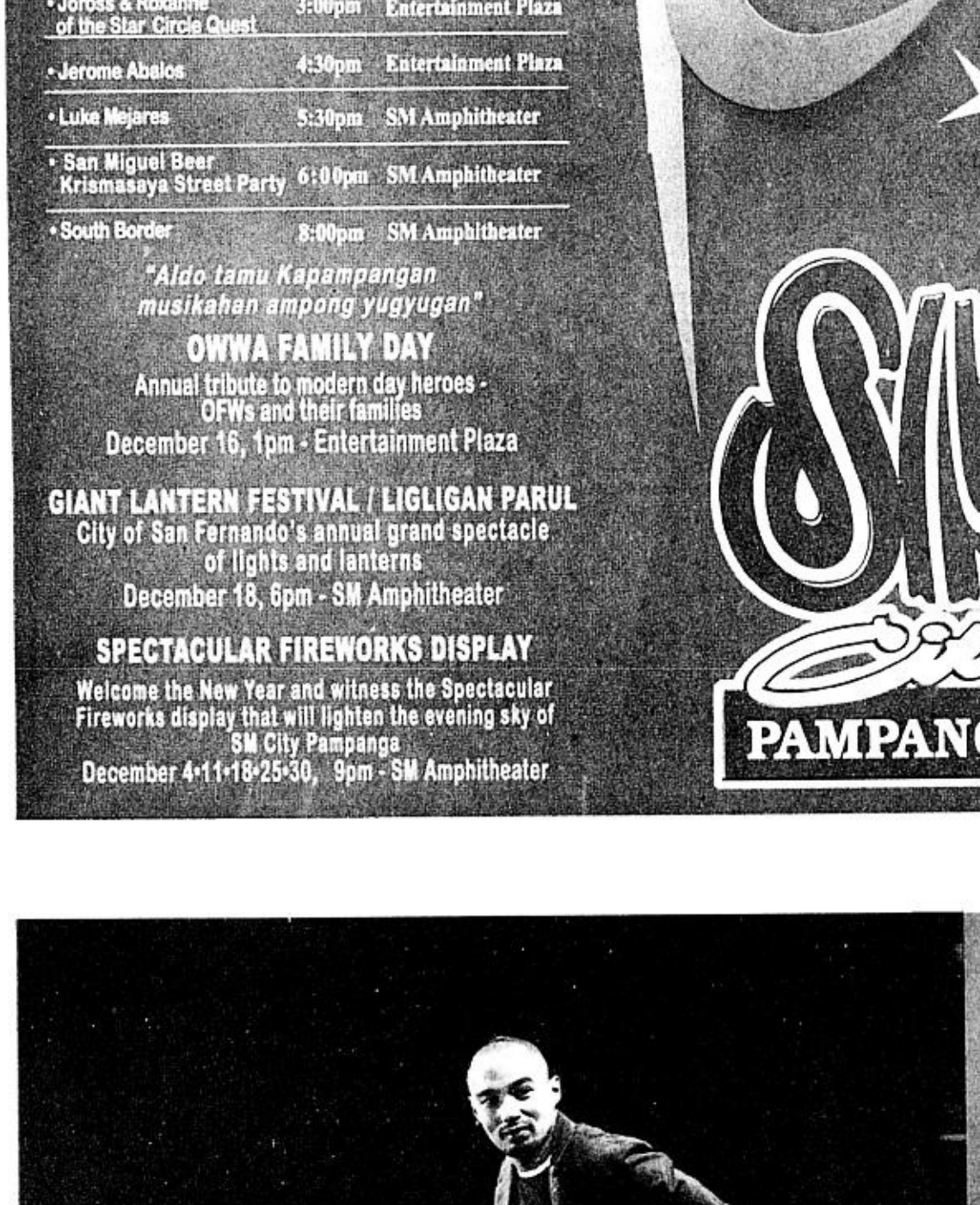
"Aldo tamu Kapampangan musikahan ampong yugyugan"

OWWA FAMILY DAY
Annual tribute to modern day heroes - OFWs and their families
December 16, 1pm - Entertainment Plaza

GIANT LANTERN FESTIVAL / LIGLIGAN PARUL
City of San Fernando's annual grand spectacle of lights and lanterns
December 18, 6pm - SM Amphitheater

SPECTACULAR FIREWORKS DISPLAY
Welcome the New Year and witness the Spectacular Fireworks display that will lighten the evening sky of SM City Pampanga
December 4-11-18-25-30, 9pm - SM Amphitheater

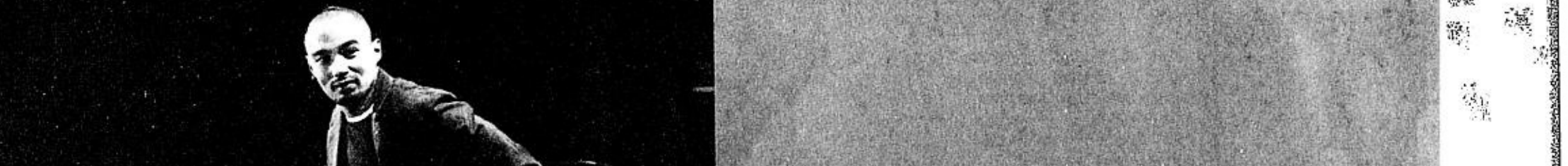
SM City PAMPANGA



BPI EXPRESS CREDIT

This Christmas, use your BPI Edge or Mini-Edge for a chance to win 1 of 3 Peugeot 206 cc's.

Give yourself more credit.



BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISLANDS
A tradition of leadership

Distributed by Autofrance Philippines Inc.

Next year could be your happiest new year because you could be driving around in a brand new Peugeot 206 cc. Simply use your BPI Edge or Mini-Edge for all your Christmas shopping. Every P500 single purchase gives you one raffle entry. The more you use BPI Edge or Mini-Edge, the bigger your chances of winning. So hit the stores now. You've got less than 30 days till the promo ends – December 31, 2004. To join, drop your charge slips in drop boxes at BPI or BPI Family Bank branches or BPI Express Banking Centers.

Apply now and get a chance to win. Each approved principal or extension card applicant gets one raffle coupon.

For inquiries, call 89-100.

*Winners will be drawn on January 15, 2005

*Approved by DTI-NCR Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1250, Series of 2004
1 Peugeot 206 cc to be raffled off among approved card applicants
2 Peugeot 206 cc's to be raffled off among current cardholders

ENTERTAINMENT Metro

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

Editor Louie C. Camino
Assistant Editor Emmie G. Velarde

Text us your feedback: Inquirer ent name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

TEN MINUTES 30 years ago was all Simon Santos (left) had with his idol. Last February, Simon, carrying his precious book, and his brother Steve Santos (in black) spent more time with FPJ.

Da King's 'No. 1 fan' gets wish

By Nini Valera

THE SON of painter Malang, who has been collecting Fernando Poe Jr. movie print ads since 1955, was able to give the actor a book of his collection.

Simon Malang Santos, 51, told INQUIRER Entertainment last Tuesday he saw the actor last Feb. 10 and was able to give him the book in person.

"That had been my wish for the longest time," Santos said in Filipino. "I wanted to give Da King, my idol, the book in person."

Santos' collection, which has been compiled in four volumes, was featured in Inquirer Entertainment on Oct. 17, 2003.

Former actress Ana Marin, who has a child with FPJ, Ronian Poe, apparently read the feature and dropped by Santos' video shop on West Avenue in Quezon City and asked to look at the book, according to Santos.

She also asked if she could give the book to FPJ, said Santos.

But Santos did not want to let go of the book and decided to wait for the time when he would see his idol and give him the book himself.

FPJ party

"I saw Susan Roces one time in Greenhills and introduced myself as Da King's biggest fan," Santos recalled. "She was eating in a restaurant and I just approached her. That was in August or September last year, before FPJ announced his candidacy. She told me, '*Sayang*, Ronnie is in the States.' Then she asked for my card and told me she would call me when he returned. She did not call. Maybe, she was busy or she might have misplaced my calling card. I told myself I'd wait for another chance."

Santos finally got that chance when a staff member of the actor invited him to a party last February at the FPJ compound on Del Monte Avenue in Quezon City where a mini rally was being held for the actor's presidential candidacy.

"I brought with me two copies of the book—one to give to FPJ, the other for myself," narrated Santos. "I asked him to sign my copy, and gave him the other book. He was amazed when he looked at it, and asked me where I got the copies of the ads. I told him I started collecting the ads in the '60s from newspaper clippings, and the rest came from my research at the National Library. He told me he was happy to have the book since he did not have anything like it. He gave the book immediately to his secretary. I heard him tell her not to lose it."

AT LONG LAST, Poe read Santos' labor of love

FPJ wrote in Santos' book: "Dear Simon, Gratefully, Fernando Poe Jr."

Film anecdotes

Da King, Santos said, also related to him anecdotes of his movies as the actor scanned through the pages of the book.

"For example, when he was looking at the ad of 'Dakilang 9,' he told me he made 'Magic 7' because of the former's success," Santos said.

The actor also shared with him his own collection of FPJ films, which are kept in the FPJ compound. He also posed for pictures with his No. 1 fan.

"I felt that he treasured the book and that made me very happy," Santos recalled. "Maybe I would have regrets if I did not give him the book. I am also very happy that he saw my labor."

In an earlier interview with Santos for the story on his collection last year, the fan told INQUIRER Entertainment he was hoping FPJ would contact him and ask to see the book.

"I hope that when he reads this, he would contact me and we could set an appointment so I could show him my collection," Santos had said then. "That's all I ask of the man."

Unbelieving

Santos first met FPJ in 1974 and talked to him for 10 minutes.

"I was only 21 then, and I told him that he had been my idol for the longest time," said Santos. "He told me not to talk about such things in public because it would only make him look old."

The collection of Santos is one of the unique memorabilia of the man, whom millions of Filipinos idolized and voted for in the last presidential election.

"Yes, I voted for him," Santos admitted, even if in the earlier interview he said he wished that FPJ would not enter politics. "I still can't believe that he's dead. I am so sad that he is."

Santos' book becomes more valuable now that FPJ has died.

"Through it, FPJ's myth and legend would live on," Santos said.

'What's in store for the dead?'

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

TEN years ago, on Nov. 16, 1994, while I was trying to get through the so-called FPJ legend and inquiring into his psyche, Fernando Poe Jr. already had thoughts of the afterlife and actually answered questions on death when he talked to this writer for the cover story of Nov. 27, 1994 edition of The Sunday Inquirer.

"I had thought of death at certain points of my life," FPJ admitted 10 years ago during the interview at the Bistro Lorenzo on Annapolis Street in Greenhills, San Juan, just two blocks away from Lincoln Street where he lived. "At times when I think of death, I ask myself: what is it like being lifeless? What is the feeling like? What is in store for people who pass away?"

Some people around FPJ—who was then promoting a film on the life of former NBI Director Epimaco Velasco—told me the actor was afraid of plane rides and that was supposedly the reason he hardly went abroad.

And so I asked the question myself: Was he afraid of plane rides?

"No, I am not afraid to take the plane," he told me then. "But just like any passenger, I worry. What it something happens?"

Turbulent flight

According to the king of Philippine movies, at one time during his close friend Joseph Estrada's vice presidential campaign, when they were always riding a helicopter, they experienced flight turbulence and they exchanged worried looks.

To brighten up the situation, FPJ told Erap: "If we crashed in this flight and something bad happened to us, I am sure you'd get the lead billing on the front pages because you are the vice presidential aspirant."

According to FPJ, Erap shot back, "*Sana hindi ako maunang mamatay. Pero 'pag nauna ako, ilalakad pa rin kita kay* San Pedro (But if I passed away ahead of you, I'd see to it you'd get a fair deal from St. Peter)."

As it turned out, it was FPJ who passed away ahead of Erap, not in a helicopter crash but coronary thrombosis.

FPJ answered related questions on death and wondered aloud, "*Grabe ka maka*-interview. *Pati kamatayan ko gusto mo nang pagusapan*."

But he gamely went on and concluded seriously, "It's actually better to prepare for that eventuality. It's kind of morbid buying all kinds of insurance and memorial plans but when it's time to go, you should at least spare your loved one the trouble of worrying about your burial expenses. You must learn how to look beyond. Of course we all hope we will have a beautiful exit."

FPJ's exit was of course short of beautiful but it was dramatic and caught him in the middle of a Christmas party.

THE KING and the author after the 1994 interview

I asked him about the secret of his reign as King of Philippine Movies for more than three decades, but he told me to ask other people instead.

On why he identified with the common man, FPJ said, "I had my struggling days both as an actor and as producer. I started as a bit player and when I went into producing, it wasn't easy even if I had a name. I know how it is to run out of working capital because I've been through that myself."

Hooked on opera

Scriptwriter Baby Nebrida, who was beside me during the interview, offered to explain the FPJ mystique in the Filipino film industry. "He was producer first and foremost and he is also an actor. He was a bit player before he became a full-blown actor and he also directs. So he is Every-

WHAT'S/2

Show biz stands still

By Nini Valera

THE MOVIE industry stopped and mourned collectively the death of Fernando Poe Jr. starting Monday.

Regular programming of ABS CBN's "Morning Star" was devoted to a tribute to FPJ, who lay in coma for two days—after suffering a stroke last Sunday—until he died a minute after midnight Tuesday.

On the show via phone patch, FPJ's show biz friends talked about the man and how he touched their lives.

Offer to help Regal

Actor Cesar Montano credited FPJ for helping him shape his career, especially his shift to directing, by giving him a crash course and priceless tips in movie making. Montano has so far directed four movies, including "Panaghoy sa Suba," an all-Visayan film that is part of this month's Metro Manila Film Festival.

A press conference for the movie "Mano Po 3, My Love," scheduled for Tuesday night was cancelled. The film's producer, Lily Monteverde was interviewed by phone at the wake of FPJ at the Arlington Memorial Homes in Pasig City where media people were barred from entering.

Monteverde said FPJ's wife Susan Roces was busy entertaining members of the family and the couple's close friends.

SHOW BIZ/2

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Filipino gospel film wins in NY film fest

"KANDUNGAN NG LANGIT," directed by Gina Marissa Tagasa-Gil

"KANDUNGAN ng Langit," (Cradle of Heaven,) a Filipino gospel fim written and directed by Gina Marissa Tagasa-Gil, won the award for best drama at the prestigious New York International Independent Film and Video Festival (NYIIFVF) held Nov. 12-21.

At first screening, the film won the Fantastic Reviewers' Choice Award: Two Thumbs Up category. It was one of 300 films from all over the world that made it to the finals, and bested 70 other entries for best drama.

The award will be given to Gina and Korean producer Jae Jung

FILIPINO/3

Show biz stands still

From page 1

The movie producer recalled on national TV how FPJ had once offered his services to her at the time when her film outfit Regal Films was not in good shape.

Out of body experience

But it was business as usual on GMA 7's "Sis," which devoted the whole show yesterday in recalling the songs and dance trends started by the Stateside pop group Village People and the local version it spawned, Hagibis. The local group's lone active member Sonny Parsons was among the guests, composed of Viva Hotmen and Masculados, who were all made to dance and ape the moves of the originals.

Watching "Sis" seemed like an out-of-body experience in a time of mourning for the passing of a legend who loomed larger than life.

Sen. Bong Revilla spent Tuesday night at St. Luke's Medical Center. FPJ was a principal sponsor in the actor-senator's wedding to Lani Mercado.

In a statement he sent to INQUIRER Entertainment, Bong said, "it is really disheartening that in a season that we are supposedly exchanging cards and gifts, the nation mourns for the loss of a person who had been an inspiration to the Filipino masses, particularly to the oppressed and victims of social injustice.

"The death of movie icon Fernando Poe Jr. ... was construed as one big blow to the movie industry and to the national leadership as well. At a time when the film industry is groping for survival, the death of a person synonymous to the entertainment business was very much felt. He had contributed and dedicated every effort to save the industry from the brink of collapse."

Hero's promise

Bong, an action star himself, described FPJ as an "epitome of a hero ... someone who liberated and defended the masses from the forces of evil and someone who crushed despotism perpetrated by the seemingly indestructible human rights violators."

With FPJ's death, the hope of the movie industry people who have depended on him for survival during this downtrend in show biz seemed to have also died.

A longtime movie extra who had always run to FPJ for financial help said the actor's death is the end for him, too.

"*Baka pupulutin na lang ako sa kangkungan* (I might just end up in the trash)," said the bit player, who claimed FPJ had promised to give him a small sum to bankroll a small business.

FPJ was in the process of developing a *teleserye* on his father's life, which would have aired next year. The actor was supposed to direct the teleserye and star in it.

'What's in store for the dead?'

From page 1

man of the industry. He differs from others because his sensitivity is people-oriented. Let's face it, the orientation in the film industry is still feudalistic where producers are king and the rest are just workers or the equivalent of the serfs. FPJ doesn't belong to that category. He's the first to raise hell if you so much as downgrade the small workers."

Actor-baritone Gemaliel Viray, who played lawyer or governor in many FPJ films, said if FPJ caught anyone shouting or cursing the crew members for no reason at all, that person was in trouble, because FPJ himself treated superstars and bit players and plain extras alike.

Viray also confided that FPJ was hooked on opera music.

While singing on the set of an FPJ film in preparation for an opera role, Viray at one time was interrupted by FPJ who asked him, "Is that the opera where they sing this melody," and forthwith Da King proceeded to hum a familiar melody from the Libiamo duet of the opera "La Traviata."

"Yes," answered a surprised Viray.

Voice lessons

Then FPJ told the baritone his little known secret. "Did you know that I took voice lessons from bass baritone Jose Mossesgeld Santiago-Font upon the prodding of my father?"

If you're not familiar with the name, Santiago-Font was the first and last Filipino to sing at Italy's famous opera house La Scala di Milan, in 1928.

After that cover story came out, FPJ sent me a telegram saying he enjoyed reading it and that he was particularly moved by a portion talking about the afterlife.

We met again a year later in the launching of Ricky Lo's book and FPJ signed the page where his photo appeared and gamely posed with me for a photograph.

As music writer on the side, I regret not exploring FPJ's fascination with opera and how his voice lessons prospered. Would he have been a singer if he did not become king of Philippine movies?

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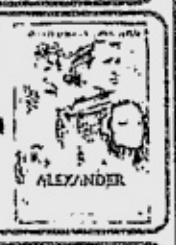

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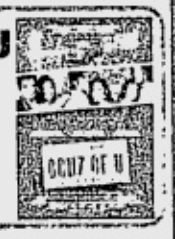

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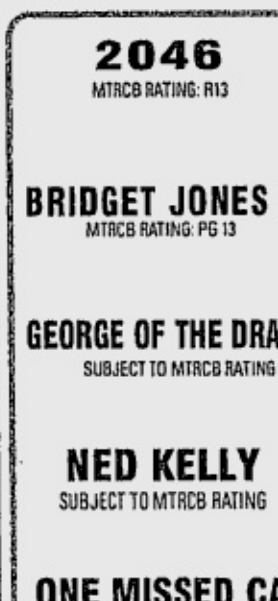

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6 BAD SANTA

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Filipino gospel...

From page 2

Jang of White Windows Film Productions during ceremonies in New York on Dec. 17.

Gina calls it a "miracle movie."

"We had a small budget, we shot it in three days, we had no name actors or actresses, 80 percent of the cast had no experience in acting," she says. "We just put them through a one-day workshop.

"I expected that when they saw it was a religious film, they would just stand up and leave. But they branded it 'extraordinary,' and some members of the audience, some of them Filipinos, were weeping."

The film is based on the true story of Liway (not her real name), a victim of leprosy treated as an outcast by her family after they discover her disease. Initially she is filled with bitterness, but she has a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, and learns to forgive.

"Actually, we are all lepers, eaten up inside by sin," Gina says, describing the core message of the film. "Inner healing, transformation, and the triumph of love can only come through Jesus Christ. That is such an important message in our world filled with hatred and anger."

The "700 Club Asia" TV program replays an interview with Gina and a trailer of her winning movie on Sunday, Dec. 19, at 8 a.m., on Studio 23, and on Wednesday, Dec. 22, at 4 p.m. on Zoe TV 11. The episode is hosted by Peter Kairuz and Chat Silayan-Baylon.

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CINEMA-12	NATIONAL TREASURE
CINEMA-14	1 MISSED CALL
CINEMA-15	B CUZ OF U

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

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HAROLD AND KUMAR R13 1:20,3:30,5:40,7:50,10:00	SHARK TALE GP 12:30,5:00,9:30 INCREDIBLES GP 2:30,7:00	BAD SANTA 1:25,3:35,5:45,7:55,10:05

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4 SHREK 2 — FS 12:10PM, 2:30PM, 4:50PM, 7:10PM, LMF 9:30PM (GP)

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1 ALEXANDER • THX 11:30 3:00 6:30 10:00	6 NATIONAL TREASURE 11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15 10:00
2 HAROLD AND KUMAR 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00	7 SHREK 2
3 GEORGE AND THE DRAGON	8 HONEY 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00
4 BRIDGET JONES 2 12:10 2:40 5:10 7:40 10:00	9 BAD SANTA
5 BIRTH 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	10 NED KELLY 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

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1 NATIONAL TREASURE 10:40 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	
2 BAD SANTA	5 RESERVE
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4 PA-SIYAM 10:35 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35 9:50	7 HAROLD AND KUMAR 10:20 12:15 2:10 4:05 6:00 7:55 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193/99 • 682-8280

1 SEED OF CHUCKY	5 BAD SANTA
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4 THE POLAR EXPRESS 10:30 12:30 2:30 2046 4:35 6:50 9:00	8 NANG NAK 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 8:55

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'Aviator' sidetracked by 'Sideways'

By Ruben V. Nepales
LA Correspondent

LOS ANGELES—"Sideways," a brilliant, funny adaptation of Rex Pickett's novel about two middle-aged male friends, sidetracked "The Aviator," Martin Scorsese's biopic on Howard Hughes, by capturing seven nominations for the Golden Globe Awards, which will be given next month.

In early morning ceremonies Monday at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, Lorenzo Soria, president of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA), which votes on the Golden Globes, and actors Brendan Fraser, Mira Sorvino and Drea De Matteo, announced that the indie film "Sideways" won nominations for best motion picture, musical or comedy; best actor, musical or comedy (Paul Giamatti); best supporting actress (Virginia Madsen); best supporting actor (Thomas Haden Church); best director (Alexander Payne); best screenplay (Payne and Jim Taylor), and best original score (Rolfe Kent).

The buddy film set in Southern California's wine country has already been picked as the year's best by several critics groups, including those from Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Boston.

Jamie Foxx earned not one but three acting nods in his first time to be nominated for the Golden Globes. The three nominations honoring a single actor was also a first in the 62-year history of the awards given by the group of Hollywood journalists.

"SIDEWAYS," with Paul Giamati, Thomas Haden Church

3 birthday gifts

Foxx made news with his acclaimed performances, including his portrayal of Ray Charles in "Ray" (best actor, musical or comedy), "Collateral" (best supporting actor) and "Redemption" (best actor in a mini-series or a motion picture for television).

In a statement given to the INQUIRER, Foxx, who turned 37 on Monday, said, "What a great way to start the day with three birthday gifts from the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. I am honored to be mentioned in the same categories with such tremendously talented actors."

"The Aviator" got six nominations, including best motion picture, drama; best actor, drama (Leonardo DiCaprio); best supporting actress (a dazzling Cate Blanchett as Katherine Hepburn); and best director (Scorsese).

Six film nominations, instead of the customary five, in the drama category reflected a tight race. The other best motion picture, drama nominees are "Closer," "Finding Neverland," "Million Dollar Baby," "Kinsey" and "Hotel Rwanda."

"Closer," Mike Nichols' adaptation of Patrick Marber's play, saw two of its supporting actors, Natalie Portman and Clive Owen, win nominations while its leads, Julia Roberts and Jude Law received none.

Eastwood's faith

"Finding Neverland," a free interpretation on the life of J.M. Barrie and how he came to write "Peter Pan," landed a best actor, drama nomination for Johnny Depp, who was last year's Golden Globe best actor in a musical or comedy for "Pirates of the Caribbean."

Clint Eastwood reportedly believed in his "Million Dollar Baby" so much that he pushed for his latest directorial "baby" to be released late this year, instead of next year, so it comes out in time for the awards season.

Eastwood's faith in his female boxing drama paid off with five nominations, including two for him as best director and for best original score, and citations for Hilary Swank for best actress in a drama and Morgan Freeman for best supporting actor.

Swank, like Foxx, must have gotten a nice wake-up call. Her name was mentioned twice in the early morning announcement, the second one as a nominee for best actress in a mini-series or a motion picture for TV for "Iron Jawed Angels."

"Kinsey" clearly benefited from the strong performances of Liam Neeson as the sex researcher Alfred Kinsey, and Laura Linney as his wife in a highly unconventional relationship, resulting in their nomination for best actor in a drama and best supporting actress.

"Hotel Rwanda," about the efforts of Paul Rusesabagina, played by Don Cheadle, who netted a best actor in a drama nod, to save hundreds of Rwanda's citizens from the horrors of a civil war in 1994, rounded out the best drama nominees.

'The Incredibles'

Competing against "Sideways" in the best motion picture, musical or comedy, are "Andrew Lloyd Webber's The Phantom of the Opera," the much-awaited film version of the popular musical, the excellent animated film "The Incredibles," "Ray" and "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind," from the brilliant scriptwriting mind of Charlie Kaufman, who cinched a best screenplay nomination.

"Eternal" also bagged nominations for its leads, Jim Carrey and Kate Winslet.

Winslet's rivals for the best actress in a musical or comedy trophy are Annette Bening ("Being Julia"), Emmy Rossum, the 18-year-old who landed the plum Christine role in "The Phantom," awards favorite Renee Zellweger ("Bridget Jones: The Edge of reason"), and a surprise, Ashley Judd, for her role as Cole Porter's wife in the musical "De-Lovely."

HFPA president Lorenzo Soria

HFPA vice president Elmar Biebl

CHAMPAGNE flowed at 6 a.m., following the announcement of nominations

HFPA PHOTOS BY JANET R. NEPALES

Judd's leading man, Kevin Kline, also pulled a surprise by landing in the fight for best actor in a musical or comedy. Kline's competitors, aside from Carrey, Foxx and Giamatti, include Kevin Spacey for his faithful portrayal of '60s singer Bobby Darin in "Beyond the Sea" which the actor himself directed.

In the drama category, Imelda Staunton—whose performance as a 1950s London abortionist has been topping film critics' best actress lists—leads the race against Swank and Nicole Kidman, who was brilliantly understated as a woman confronted by a boy claiming to be her dead husband in "Birth."

No Uma, Scarlett

Some awards prognosticators failed to predict the inclusion of Uma Thurman in "Kill Bill Vol. 2" and last year's twice-nominated Scarlett Johansson for the John Travolta starrer, "A Love Song for Bobby Long."

In supporting roles, Blanchett, Linney, Madsen and Portman have to contend with Meryl Streep, a perennial nominee and frequent winner who won her raves this year as the ambitious politician and mother in the remake of "The Manchurian Candidate."

Best supporting actor nominees Foxx, Freeman, Owen and Haden Church face off against David Carradine, for his role in the acclaimed "Kill Bill Vol. 2."

Javier Bardem, who won the best actor honors at the Berlin Film Festival and the recent European Film Awards, that continent's equivalent of the Oscars, for his portrayal of a Spaniard who was paralyzed and spent 30 years fighting the courts so he can die with dignity, completes the best actor nominee circle of Depp, DiCaprio, Neeson and Cheadle.

Good roles for men

Appearing one after another in several major films this year, Jude Law failed to make 2004 as his year in the awards derby. Also left out in the tight actor races are Cruise ("Collateral"), Eastwood ("Million Dollar Baby"), Travolta ("A Love Song"), Bill Murray ("The Life Aquatic"), Jeff Bridges ("The Door in the Floor"), Kevin Bacon ("The Woodsman"), Sean Penn ("The Assassination of Richard Nixon"), Liev Schreiber ("The Manchurian Candidate") and Colin Farrell ("A Home at the End of the World").

The long list reflects a year of good roles for men. It was not a banner year for actresses. Elmar Biebl, HFPA vice president, told INQUIRER Entertainment, "It's a strange phenomenon that despite the fact that in recent years, there were so many strong women roles, this year the women were almost relegated back to the supporting roles. And yet there was a lot of good male roles. Had it not been for strong performances by actresses in international films, it would have been hard to vote for best actress nominees, especially considering that unlike the Oscars, we have two categories for best actress, for drama and musical or comedy. That makes it harder to find enough roles for women to celebrate."

Earlier generating buzz as likely nominees but their names were not called Monday morning are two foreign actresses, Colombia's Catalina Sandino Moreno in the well-reviewed "Maria Full of Grace" and France's Audrey Tautou in "A Very Long Engagement."

None for 'The Passion'

Also not earning any nominations was the controversial blockbuster "The Passion of the Christ," directed by Mel Gibson, which was deemed eligible for best foreign language film nomination, not for best motion picture, drama, since the Golden Globe rules allowed only films in English to vie for best picture.

"THE AVIATOR" with Leonardo DiCaprio

The film was eligible in all other categories.

Another much-talked about film, Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11," was earlier declared ineligible for a best picture nomination since documentaries are not qualified in that category. A special award proposed by a member for Moore for his "influence in reinvigorating the documentary genre" did not get the majority of votes that it needed to pass.

Also not cited were James Brooks' heavily buzzed Oscar favorite "Spanglish" and the hit "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban."

In the best foreign language film race, France ran away with two nominations for "The Chorus" and "A Very Long Engagement." The other three finalists were China's "House of Flying Daggers," Brazil's "The Motorcycle Diaries" and Spain's "The Sea Inside."

The Philippine entry was "Crying Ladies," the Mark Meily comedy-drama produced by Unitel Pictures which garnered good reviews in the US press.

No clear winner

Among the wildly diverse nominees for best original song are "Old Habits Die Hard" (from "Alfie") by Rolling Stone legend Mick Jagger and former Eurythmics bandman David Stewart, and "Learn to be Lonely" (from "The Phantom") by Webber and Charles Hart, which was sung by actress Minnie Driver.

The stakes are high to earn Golden Globe nominations and awards because over the years, the HFPA awards are seen as precursors of the Oscar awards. Golden Globe best picture winners have gone on to win the Oscar best picture awards in 10 of the last 11 years.

"Many people say that we are a trendsetter," said HFPA president Soria. "All we do is try to exercise our best judgment and to vote for the films that each of us thinks are deserving. We do not try to influence anyone. If anybody thinks that what we do is relevant, we are flattered."

This year is an open race, unlike last year when "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" was a clear heavy favorite to sweep the awards.

"It doesn't look like there is a clear winner this year," Soria added to INQUIRER Entertainment. "So Jan. 16 (the awards show date) will offer surprises."

HBO dominates

In the TV categories, HBO dominated the nomination field as usual, with four each for "The Sopranos" and the TV movie "The Life and Death of Peter Sellers."

ABC followed with nine nominations, including three nods for actresses Teri Hatcher, Felicity Huffman and Marcia Cross in the series, "Desperate Housewives."

Drea de Matteo, who helped announce the nominees, had the pleasure of hearing her name as a nominee for best supporting actress in a series, mini-series or motion picture for TV. The regular on "The Sopranos" is pitted against last year's Golden Globe best actress in a drama, Charlize Theron ("The Life and Death"), Anjelica Huston ("Iron Jawed Angels"), Emily Watson ("The Life and Death") and Nicollette Sheridan ("Desperate Housewives").

In an earlier announcement, Robin Williams, an 11-time Golden Globe Award nominee and five-time winner, has been selected to receive the HFPA's highest honor, the Cecil B. DeMille Award for his outstanding contribution to entertainment. Previous recipients have included Clint Eastwood, whose daughter Kathryn Eastwood is this year's Miss Golden Globe (she's the first daughter of a Cecil B. DeMille awardee to hold the title), Audrey Hepburn, Laurence Olivier, Al Pacino, Bob Hope, Frank Sinatra, Paul Newman and Sidney Poitier.

After the announcement, broadcast live on national TV in the US, journalists, publicists and media crews, some of whom had been at the grand ballroom of the Beverly Hilton since midnight, staggered out at 6 a.m. to an anteroom where waiters in elegant uniforms were offering glasses of champagne.

'Sopranos'

HBO received 20 nominations, more than twice as many as any other TV network this year.

"The Life and Death of Peter Sellers" led all HBO Original Movies, and all original movies of any network, with four nominations, while "The Sopranos" led all HBO series with four nominations.

The nominations for "The Life and Death" include best mini-series or motion picture made for TV, best performance by an actor in a mini-series or a motion picture made for TV (Geoffrey Rush), and two for best performance by an actress in a supporting role (Charlize Theron, Emily Watson).

The nominations for "The Sopranos" include best TV series, drama, best performance by an actress, drama (Edie Falco), best performance by an actress in a supporting role in a series, mini-series or motion picture made for TV (Drea de Matteo), and best performance by an actor in a supporting role (Michael Imperioli).

The other HBO nominations are three for "Iron Jawed Angels," two "Dead Wood," two for "Entourage," two for "Sex and the City," two for "Something the Lord Made," and one for "Curb Your Enthusiasm."

The author is a member of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association.

ANNOUNCING the nominees are Drea De Matteo, Brendan Fraser and Mira Sorvino, with Soria